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THE ENGLISH CHURCH

IN THE

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
LONDON

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THE

ENGLISH CHURCH

IN THE

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

BY

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AND

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CANON OF LINCOLN AND RECTOR OF EPWORTH

Church of England History

A NEW EDITION, REVISED AND ABRIDGED

Overton, J.H.

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PREFACE

TO

THE SECOND EDITION

ALTHOUGH this edition has been shortened to about half the length of the original one, it is essentially the same work. The reduction has been effected, partly by the omission of some whole chapters, partly by excisions. The chapters omitted are those upon the Jacobites, the Essayists, Church Cries, and Sacred Poetry—subjects which have only a more or less incidental bearing on the Church history of the period. The passages excised are, for the most part, quotations, discursive reflections, explanatory notes, occasional repetitions, and, speaking generally, whatever could be removed without injury to the general purpose of the narrative. There has been no attempt at abridgment in any other form.

The authors are indebted to their reviewers for many kind remarks and much careful criticism. They have endeavoured to correct all errors which have been thus pointed out to them.

As the nature of this work has sometimes been a little misapprehended, it should be added that its authors at no time intended it to be a regular history. When they first mapped out their respective shares in the joint undertaking, their design had been to write a number of short essays relating to many different features in the religion and Church history of England in the Eighteenth Century. This general purpose was adhered to; and it was only after much deliberation that the word 'Chapters' was substituted for 'Essays.' There was, however, one important modification. Fewer subjects were, in the issue, specifically discussed, but these more in detail; while some questions—such, for instance, as that of the Church in the Colonies—were scarcely touched upon. Hence a certain disproportion of treatment, which a general introductory chapter could but partially remedy.

N16650

PREFACE

TO

THE FIRST EDITION

Some years have elapsed since the authors of this work first entertained the idea of writing upon certain aspects of religious life and thought in the Eighteenth Century. If the ground is no longer so unoccupied as it was then, it appears to them that there is still abundant room for the book which they now lay before the public. Their main subject is expressly the English Church, and they write as English Churchmen, taking, however, no narrower basis than that of the National Church itself.

They desire to be responsible each for his own opinions only, and therefore the initials of the writer are attached to each chapter he has written.

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THE ENGLISH CHURCH

IN THE

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

The claim which the intellectual and religious life of England in the eighteenth century has upon our interest has been much more generally acknowledged of late years than was the case heretofore. There had been, for the most part, a disposition to pass it over somewhat slightly, as though the whole period were a prosaic and uninteresting one. Every generation is apt to depreciate the age which has so long preceded it as to have no direct bearing on present modes of life, but is yet not sufficiently distant as to have emerged into the full dignity of history. Besides, it cannot be denied that the records of the eighteenth century are, with two or three striking exceptions, not of a kind to stir the imagination. It was not a pictorial age; neither was it one of ardent feeling or energetic movement. Its special merits were not very obvious, and its prevailing faults had nothing dazzling in them, nothing that could be in any way called splendid; on the contrary, in its weaker points there was a distinctly ignoble element. The mainsprings of the religious, as well as of the political, life of the country were relaxed. In both one and the other the high feeling of faith was enervated; and this deficiency was sensibly felt in a lowering of general tone, both in the domain of intellect and in that of practice. The spirit of feudalism and of the old chivalry had all but departed, but had left a vacuum which was not yet supplied. As for loyalty, the half-hearted feeling of necessity or expedience, which for

more than half the century was the main support of the German dynasty, was something different not in degree only, but in kind, from that which had upheld the throne in time past. Jacobitism, on the other hand, was not strong enough to be more than a faction ; and the Republican party, who had once been equal to the Royalists in fervour of enthusiasm, and superior to them in intensity of purpose, were now wholly extinct. The country increased rapidly in strength and in material prosperity ; its growth was uninterrupted ; its resources continued to develop ; its political constitution gained in power and consolidation. But there was a deficiency of disinterested principle. There was an open field for the operation of such sordid motives and debasing tactics as those which disgraced Walpole's lengthened administration.

In the following chapters there will be only too frequent occasion to refer to a somewhat corresponding state of things in the religious life of the country. For two full centuries the land had laboured under the throes of the Reformation. Even when William III. died, it could scarcely be said that England had decisively settled the form which her National Church should take. The 'Church in danger' cries of Queen Anne's reign, and the bitter war of pamphlets, were outward indications that suspense was not yet completely over, and that both friends and enemies felt they had still occasion to calculate the chances alike of Presbyterianism and of the Papacy. But when George I. ascended the throne in peace, it was at last generally realised that the 'Settlement' of which so much had been spoken was now effectually attained. Church and State were so far secured from change, that their defenders might rest from anxiety. It was not a wholesome rest that followed. Long-standing disputes and the old familiar controversies were almost lulled to silence, but in their place a sluggish calm rapidly spread over the Church, not only over the established National Church, but over it and also over every community of Nonconformists. It is remarkable how closely the beginning of the season of spiritual lassitude corresponds with the accession of the first George. The country had never altogether recovered from the reaction of lax indifference into which it had fallen after the Restoration. Nevertheless, a good deal had occurred since that time to keep the minds of Churchmen, as well as of politicians, awake and active ; and a good deal had been done to stem the tide of immorality which had then broken over the kingdom. The Church of England was certainly not asleep either in the time of the Seven Bishops, when James II. was King, or under its Whig rulers at the end of the century. And in Queen Anne's time, amid all the virulence of

hostile Church parties, there was a healthy stream of life which made itself very visible in the numerous religious associations which sprang up everywhere in the great towns. It might seem as if there were a certain heaviness in the English mind, which requires some outward stimulus to keep alive its zeal. For so soon as the press of danger ceased, and party strifes abated, with the accession of the House of Brunswick, Christianity began forthwith to slumber. The trumpet of Wesley and Whitefield was needed before that unseemly slumber could again be broken.

It will not, however, be forgotten that twice in successive generations the Church of England had been deprived, through misfortune or through folly, of some of her best men. She had suffered on either hand. By the ejection of 1662, through a too stringent enforcement of the new Act of Uniformity, she had lost the services of some of the most devoted of her Puritan sons, men whose views were in many cases no way distinguishable from those which had been held without rebuke by some of the most honoured bishops of Elizabeth's time. By the ejection of 1689, through what was surely a needless strain upon their allegiance, many high-minded men of a different order of thought were driven, if not from her communion, at all events from her ministrations. It was a juncture when the Church could ill afford to be weakened by the defection of some of the most earnest and disinterested upholders of the Primitive and Catholic, as contrasted with the more directly Protestant elements of her Constitution. This twofold drain upon her strength could scarcely have failed to impair the robust vitality which was soon to be so greatly needed to combat the early beginnings of the dead resistance of spiritual lethargy.

But this listlessness in most branches of practical religion must partly be attributed to a cause which gives the history of religious thought in the eighteenth century its principal importance. In proportion as the Church Constitution approached its final settlement, and as the controversies, which from the beginning of the Reformation had been unceasingly under dispute, gradually wore themselves out, new questions came forward, far more profound and fundamental, and far more important in their speculative and practical bearings, than those which had attracted so much notice and stirred so much excitement during the two preceding centuries. The existence of God was scarcely called into question by the boldest doubters; or such doubts, if they found place at all, were expressed only under the most covert implications. But, short of this, all the mysteries of religion were scrutinized; all the deep and hidden things of faith were brought in question, and submitted to the test of reason. Is

there such a thing as a revelation from God to men of Himself and of His will? If so, what is its nature, its purposes, its limits? What are the attributes of God? What is the meaning of life? What is man's hereafter? Does a divine spirit work in man? and if it does, what are its operations, and how are they distinguishable? What is spirit? and what is matter? What does faith rest upon? What is to be said of inspiration, and authority, and the essential attributes of a church? These, and other questions of the most essential religious importance, as the nature and signification of the doctrines of the Trinity, of the Incarnation of Christ, of Redemption, of Atonement, discussions as to the relations between faith and morals, and on the old, inevitable enigmas of necessity and liberty, all more or less entered into that mixed whirl of earnest inquiry and flippant scepticism which is summed up under the general name of the Deistic Controversy. For it is not hard to see how intimately the secondary controversies of the time were connected with that main and central one, which not only engrossed so much attention on the part of theologians and students, but became a subject of too general conversation in every coffee-house and place of public resort.

In mental, as well as in physical science, it seems to be a law that force cannot be expended in one direction without some corresponding relaxation of it in another. And thus the disproportionate energies which were diverted to the intellectual side of religion were exercised at some cost to its practical part. Bishops were writing in their libraries, when otherwise they might have been travelling round their dioceses. Men were pondering over abstract questions of faith and morality, who else might have been engaged in planning or carrying out plans for the more active propagation of the faith, or a more general improvement in popular morals. The defenders of Christianity were searching out evidences, and battling with deistical objections, while they slackened in their fight against the more palpable assaults of the world and the flesh. Pulpits sounded with theological arguments where admonitions were urgently needed. Above all, reason was called to decide upon questions before which man's reason stands impotent; and imagination and emotion, those great auxiliaries to all deep religious feeling, were bid to stand rebuked in her presence, as hinderers of the rational faculty, and upstart pretenders to rights which were not theirs. 'Enthusiasm' was frowned down, and no small part of the light and fire of religion fell with it.

Yet an age in which great questions were handled by great men could not be either an unfruitful or an uninteresting one. It might be unfruitful, in the sense of reaping no great harvest of

results ; and it might be uninteresting, in respect of not having much to show upon the surface, and exhibiting no great variety of active life. But much good fruit for the future was being developed and matured ; and no one, who cares to see how the present grows out of the past, will readily allow that the religious thought and the religious action of the eighteenth century are deficient in interest to our times. Our debt is greater than many are inclined to acknowledge. People see clearly that the Church of that age was, in many respects, in an undoubtedly unsatisfactory condition, sleepy and full of abuses, and are sometimes apt to think that the Evangelical revival (the expression being used in its widest sense) was the one redeeming feature of it. And as in theological and ecclesiastical thought, in philosophy, in art, in poetry, the general tendency has been reactionary, the students and writers of the eighteenth century have in many respects scarcely received their due share of appreciation. Moreover, negative results make little display. There is not much to show for the earnest toil that has very likely been spent in arriving at them ; and a great deal of the intellectual labour of the last century was of this kind. Reason had been more completely emancipated at the Reformation than it was at first at all aware of. Men who were engaged in battling against certain definite abuses, and certain specified errors, scarcely discovered at first, nor indeed for long afterwards, that they were in reality contending also for principles which would affect for the future the whole groundwork of religious conviction. They were not yet in a position to see that henceforward authority could take only a secondary place, and that they were installing in its room either reason or a more subtle spiritual faculty superior even to reason in the perception of spiritual things. It was not until near the end of the seventeenth century that the mind began to awaken to a full perception of the freedom it had won—a freedom far more complete in principle than was as yet allowed in practice. In the eighteenth century this fundamental postulate of the Reformation became for the first time a prominent, and, to many minds, an absorbing subject of inquiry. For the first time it was no longer disguised from sight by the incidental interest of its side issues. The assertors of the supremacy of reason were at first arrogantly, or even insolently, self-confident, as those who were secure of carrying all before them. Gradually, the wiser of them began to feel that their ambition must be largely moderated, and that they must be content with far more negative results than they had at first imagined. The question came to be, what is reason unable to do ? What are its limits ? and how is it to be supplemented ? An immensity of learning, and of arguments good and bad, was

lavished on either side in the controversy between the deists and the orthodox. In the end, it may perhaps be said that two axioms were established, which may sound in our own day like commonplaces, but which were certainly very insufficiently realised when the controversy began. It was seen on the one hand that reason was free, and that on the other it was encompassed by limitations against which it strives in vain. The Deists lost the day. Their objections to revelation fell through; and Christianity rose again, strengthened rather than weakened by their attack. Yet they had not laboured in vain, if success may be measured, not by the gaining of an immediate purpose, but by solid good effected, however contrary in kind to the object proposed. So far as a man works with a single-hearted desire to win truth, he should rejoice if his very errors are made, in the hands of an overruling Providence, instrumental in establishing truth. Christianity in England had arrived in the eighteenth century at one of those periods of revision when it has become absolutely necessary to examine the foundations of its teaching, at any risk of temporary disturbance to the faith of individuals. The advantage ultimately gained was twofold. It was not only that the vital doctrines of Christian faith had been scrutinised both by friends and enemies, and were felt to have stood the proof. But also defenders of received doctrine learnt, almost insensibly, very much from its opponents. They became aware—or if not they, at all events their successors became aware—that orthodoxy must, in some respects, modify the stringency of its conclusions; that there was need, in other instances, of disentangling Christian verities from the scholastic refinements which had gradually grown up around them; and that there were many questions which might safely be left open to debate without in any way impairing the real defences of Christianity. A sixteenth or seventeenth-century theologian regarded most religious questions from a standing point widely different in general character from that of his equal in piety and learning in the eighteenth century. The circumstances and tone of thought which gave rise to the Deistic and its attendant controversies mark with tolerable definiteness the chief period of transition.

The Evangelical revival, both that which is chiefly connected with the name of the Wesleys and of Whitefield, and that which was carried on more exclusively within the Church of England, closely corresponded in many of its details to what had often occurred before in the history of the Christian Church. But it had also a special connection with the controversies which preceded it. When minds had become tranquillised through the subsidence of discussions which had threatened to overthrow their

faith, they were the more prepared to listen with attention and respect to the stirring calls of the Evangelical preacher. The very sense of weariness, now that long controversy had at last come to its termination, tended to give a more entirely practical form to the new religious movement. And although many of its leaders were men who had not come to their prime till the Deistical controversy was almost over, and who would probably have viewed the strife, if it had still been raging, with scarcely any other feeling than one of alarmed concern, this was at all events not the case with John Wesley. There are tolerably clear signs that it had materially modified the character of his opinions. The train of thought which produced the younger Dodwell's 'Christianity not Founded upon Argument'—a book of which people scarcely knew, when it appeared, whether it was a serious blow to the Deist cause, or a formidable assistance to it—considerably influenced Wesley's mind, as it also did that of William Law and his followers. He entirely repudiated the mysticism which at one time had begun to attract him; but, like the German pietists, who were in some sense the religious complement of Rationalism, he never ceased to be comparatively indifferent to orthodoxy, so long as the man had the witness of the Spirit proving itself in works of faith. In whatever age of the Church Wesley had lived, he would have been no doubt an active agent in the holy work of evangelisation. But opposed as he was to prevailing influences, he was yet a man of his time. We can hardly fancy the John Wesley whom we know living in any other century than his own. Spending the most plastic, perhaps also the most reflective period of his life in a chief centre of theological activity, he was not unimpressed by the storm of argument which was at that time going on around him. It was uncongenial to his temper, but it did not fail to leave upon him its lasting mark.

The Deistical and other theological controversies of the earlier half of the century, and the Wesleyan and Evangelical revival in its latter half, are quite sufficient in themselves to make the Church history of the period exceedingly important. They are beyond doubt its principal and leading events. But there was much more besides in the religious life of the country that is well worthy of note. The Revolution which had so lately preceded the opening of the century, and the far more pregnant and eventful Revolution which convulsed Europe at its close, had both of them many bearings, though of course in very different ways, upon the development of religious and ecclesiastical thought in this country. One of the first and principal effects of the change of dynasty in 1688 had been to give an immense impetus

to Protestant feeling. This was something altogether different in kind from the Puritanism which had entered so largely into all the earlier history of that century. It was hardly a theological movement; neither was it one that bore primarily and directly upon personal religion. It was, so to say, a strategical movement of self defence. The aggression of James II. upon the Constitution had not excited half the anger and alarm which had been caused by his attempts to reintroduce Popery. And now that the exiled King had found a refuge in the court of the monarch who was not only regarded as the hereditary enemy of England, but was recognised throughout Europe as the great champion of the Roman Catholic cause, religion, pride, interest, and fear combined to make all parties in England stand by their common Protestantism. Not only was England prime leader in the struggle against Papal dominion; but Churchmen of all views, the great bulk of the Nonconformists, and all the reformed Churches abroad, agreed in thinking of the English Church as the chief bulwark of the Protestant interest.

Projects of comprehension had ended in failure before the eighteenth century opened. But they were still fresh in memory, and men who had taken great interest in them were still living, and holding places of honour. For years to come there were many who greatly regretted that the scheme of 1689 had not been carried out, and whose minds constantly recurred to the possibility of another opportunity coming about in their time. Such ideas, though they scarcely took any practical form, cannot be left out of account in the Church history of the period. In the midst of all that strife of parties which characterised Queen Anne's reign, a longing desire for Church unity was by no means absent. Only these aspirations had taken by this time a somewhat altered form. The history of the English Constitution has ever been marked by alternations, in which Conservatism and attachment to established authority have sometimes been altogether predominant, at other times a resolute, even passionate contention for the security and increase of liberty. In Queen Anne's reign a reaction of the former kind set in, not indeed by any means universal, but sufficient to contrast very strongly with the period which had preceded it. One of the symptoms of it was a very decided current of popular feeling in favour of the Church. People began to think it possible, or even probable, that with the existing generation of Dissenters English Nonconformity would so nearly end, as to be no longer a power that would have to be taken into any practical account. Concession, therefore, to the scruples of 'weak brethren' seemed to be no longer needful; and if alterations were not really called

for, evidently they would be only useless and unsettling. In this reign, therefore, aspirations after unity chiefly took the form of friendly overtures between Church dignitaries in England and the Lutheran and other reformed communities abroad, as also with such leaders of the Gallican party as were inclined, if possible, to throw off the Papal supremacy and to effect at the same time certain religious and ecclesiastical reforms. Throughout the middle of the century there was not so much any craving for unity as what bore some outward resemblance to it, an indolent love of mere tranquillity. The correspondence, however, that passed between Doddridge and some of the bishops, and the interest excited by the 'Free and Candid Disquisitions,' showed that ideas of Church comprehension were not yet forgotten. About this date, another cause, in addition to the *quieta non movere* principle, interfered to the hindrance of any such proposals. Persons who entertained Arian and other heterodox opinions upon the doctrine of the Trinity were an active and increasing party; and there was fear lest any attempt to enlarge the borders of the Church should only, or chiefly, result in their procuring some modifications of the Liturgy in their favour. Later in the century, the general question revived in immediate interest under a new form. It was no longer asked, how shall we win to our national communion those who have hitherto declined to recognise its authority? The great ecclesiastical question of the day—if only it could have been taken in hand with sufficient earnestness—was rather this: how shall we keep among us in true Church fellowship this great body of religiously minded men and women who, by the mouth of their principal leader, profess real attachment to the Church of England, and yet want a liberty and freedom from rule which we know not how to give? No doubt it was a difficulty—more difficult than may at first appear—to incorporate the activities of Methodism into the general system of the National Church. Only it is very certain that obstacles which might have been overcome were not generally grappled with in the spirit, or with the seriousness of purpose, which the crisis deserved. Meanwhile, at the close of the period, when this question had scarcely been finally decided, the Revolution broke out in France. In the terror of that convulsion, when Christianity itself was for the first time deposed in France, and none knew how widely the outbreak would extend, or what would be the bound of such insurrection against laws human and divine, the unity of a common Christianity could not fail to be felt more strongly than any lesser causes of disunion. There was a kindness and sympathy of feeling manifested towards the banished French clergy, which

was something almost new in the history of Protestantism. The same cause contributed to promote the good understanding which at this time subsisted between a considerable section of Churchmen and Dissenters. Possibly some practical efforts might have been set on foot towards healing religious divisions, if the open war waged against Christianity had long been in suspense. As it was, other feelings came in, which tended rather to widen than to diminish the breach between men of strong and earnest opinions on different sides. In some men of warm religious feeling the Revolution excited a fervent spirit of Radicalism. However much they deplored the excesses and horrors which had taken place in France, they did not cease to contemplate with passionate hope the tumultuous upheaval of all old institutions, trusting that out of the ruins of the past a new and better future would derive its birth. The great majority of Englishmen, on the other hand, startled and terrified with what they saw, became fixed in a resolute determination that they would endure no sort of tampering with the English Constitution in Church or State. Whatever changes might be made for better or for worse, they would in any case have no change now. Conservatism became in their eyes a sort of religious principle from which they could not deviate without peril of treason to their faith. This was an exceedingly common feeling; among none more so than with that general bulk of steady sober-minded people of the middle classes without whose consent changes, in which they would feel strongly interested, could never be carried out. The extreme end of the last century was not a time when Church legislation, for however excellent an object, was likely to be carried out, or even thought of.

To return to the beginning of the period under review. 'Divine right,' 'Passive obedience,' 'Non-resistance,' are phrases which long ago have lost life, and which sound over the gulf of time like faint and shadowy echoes of controversies which belong to an already distant past. Even in the middle of the century it must have been difficult to realise the vehemence with which the semi-religious, semi-political, doctrines contained in those terms had been disputed and maintained in the generation preceding. Yet round those doctrines, in defence or in opposition, some of the best and most honourable principles of human nature used to be gathered—a high-minded love of liberty on the one hand, a no less lofty spirit of self-sacrifice and loyalty on the other.

The open or half-concealed Jacobitism which, for many years after the Revolution, prevailed in perhaps the majority of eighteenth-century parsonages could scarcely fail of influencing the English Church at large, both in its general action, and in its

relation to the State. This influence was in many respects a very mischievous one. In country parishes, and still more so in the universities, it fostered an unquiet political spirit which was prejudicial both to steady pastoral work and to the advancement of sound learning. It also greatly disturbed the internal unity of the Church, and that in a manner peculiarly prejudicial to its well-being. Strong doctrinal and ecclesiastical differences within a Church may do much more good in stirring a wholesome spirit of emulation, and in keeping thought alive and preventing a Church from narrowing into a sect, than they do harm by creating a spirit of division. But the semi-political element which infused its bitterness into Church parties during the first half of the eighteenth century, had no such merit. It did nothing to promote either practical activity or theological inquiry. Under its influence High and Broad Church were too often not so much rival schools of religious thought, and representatives of different tones of religious feeling, as rival factions. King William's bishops—a set of men who, on the whole, did very high honour to his selection—were regarded by a number of the clergy with suspicion and aversion, as his pledged supporters both in political and ecclesiastical matters, no less ready to upset the established order of the Church than they had been to change the ancient succession of the throne. These, in their turn, scarcely cared to conceal, if not their scorn, at all events their supreme mistrust, for men who seemed in their eyes like bigoted disturbers of a Constitution in which the country had every reason to rejoice.

More than this, Jacobitism brought the National Church into peril of downright schism. There was already a nucleus for it. If the Nonjuring separation had been nothing more than the secession of a number of High Churchmen—some of them conspicuous for their piety and learning, and almost all worthy of respect as disinterested men who had strong convictions and stood by them—the loss of such men would, even so, have been a serious matter. But the evil did not end there. Although the Nonjurors, especially after the return of Nelson and others into the lay communion of the Established Church, were often spoken of with contempt as an insignificant body, an important Jacobite success might at any time have vastly swelled their number. A great many clergymen and leading country families had simply acquiesced in the rule of William as king *de facto*, and would have transferred their allegiance without a scruple if there had seemed a strong likelihood that James or the Pretender would win the crown back again. In this case the Nonjuring communion, which always proudly insisted that it alone was the true old Church of England, might have received an immense acces-

sion of adherents. It would not by any means have based its distinctive character upon mere Jacobite principles. It would have claimed to be peculiarly representative of the Catholic claims of the English Church, while Whigs and Low Churchmen would have been more than ever convertible terms. As it was, High Churchism among country squires took a different turn. But if the Stuart cause had become once more a promising one, and had associated itself, in its relations towards the Church, with the opinions and ritual to which the Nonjurors were no less attached than Laud and his followers were in Charles I.'s day, it is easy to guess that such distinctive usages might soon be welcomed with enthusiasm by Jacobites, if for no other reason, yet as hallowed symbols of a party. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Church parties had been already strained and most unhappily embittered by political dissensions; under the circumstances supposed, division might readily have been aggravated into hopeless schism. But Jacobitism declined; and a less, but still a serious evil to the Church ensued. Jacobitism and the Papacy had become in most people's minds closely connected ideas. Hence the opinions upon Church matters prevalent among Nonjurors and their ecclesiastical sympathisers in the Established Church became also unpopular, and tainted with an unmerited suspicion of leaning towards Rome. This was no gain to the Church of the Georgian era. Quite independently of any bias which a person may feel towards this or that shade of opinion upon debated questions, it may be asserted with perfect confidence that the Church of that period would decidedly have gained by an increase of life and earnestness in any one section of its members. A colourless indifferentism was the pest of the age. Some movement in the too still waters was sorely needed. A few Ritualists, as they would now be called, in the metropolitan churches, zealous and active men, would have stimulated within the Church a certain interest and excitement which, whether it were friendly or hostile, would have been almost certainly beneficial. But, in the middle of the century, High Churchmen of this type would scarcely be found, except in Nonjuror 'conventicles,' and among the oppressed Episcopalians of Scotland.

The public relations of civil society towards religion attracted in the eighteenth century—especially in the earlier part of it—very universal attention. Of the various questions that come under this head, there was none of such practical and immediate importance as that which was concerned with the toleration of religious differences. The Toleration Act had been carried amid general approval. There had been little enthusiasm about it, but also very little opposition. Though it fell far short of what

would now be understood by tolerance, it was fully up to the level of the times. It fairly expressed what was thoroughly the case; that the spirit of intolerance had very much decreased, and that a feeling in favour of religious liberty was decidedly gaining ground. Meanwhile, in King William's reign, and still more so in that of his successor, there was a very strongly marked contention and perplexity of feeling as to what was really meant by toleration, and where its limits were to be fixed. Everybody professed to be in favour of it, so long as it was interpreted according to his own rule. The principle was granted, but there were few who had any clear idea as to the grounds upon which they granted it, and still fewer who did not think it was a principle to be carefully fenced round with limitations. The Act of Toleration had been itself based in great measure upon mere temporary considerations, there being a very strong wish to consolidate the Protestant interest against Papal aggression. Its benefits were strictly confined to the orthodox Protestant dissenters; and even they were left under many oppressive disabilities. A great principle had been conceded, and a great injustice materially abated. Henceforth English Dissenters, whose teachers had duly attested their allegiance, and duly subscribed to the thirty-six doctrinal articles of the Church of England, might attend their certified place of worship without molestation from vexatious penal laws. It was bare toleration, accorded to certain favoured bodies; and there for a long time it ended. Two wide-reaching limitations of the principle of tolerance intervened to close the gate against other Nonconformists than these. Open heresy could not be permitted, nor any worship that was adjudged to be distinctly prejudicial to the interests of the State. No word could yet be spoken, without risk of heavy penalty, against the received doctrine of the Trinity. Nonjurors and Scotch Episcopalians could only meet by stealth in private houses. As for Romanists, so far from their condition being in any way mitigated, their yoke was made the harder, and they might complain, with Rehoboam's subjects, that they were no longer chastised with whips, but with scorpions. William's reign was marked by a long list of new penal laws directed against them. There were many who quoted with great approval the advice (published in 1690, and republished in 1716) of 'a good patriot, guided by a prophetic spirit.' His 'short and easy method' was, to 'expel the whole sect from the British dominions,' and, laying aside 'the feminine weakness' of an unchristian toleration, 'once for all, to clear the land of these monsters, and force them to transplant themselves.' Much in the same way there were many good people who would have very much liked to adopt violent

physical measures against 'freethinkers' and 'atheists.' Steele in the 'Tatler,' Budgell in the 'Spectator,' and Bishop Berkeley in the 'Guardian,' all express a curious mixture of satisfaction and regret that such opinions could not be summarily punished, if not by the severest penalties of the law, at the very least by the cudgel and the horsepond. Whiston seems to have thought it possible that heterodox opinions upon the mystery of the Trinity might even yet, under certain contingencies, bring a man into peril of his life. In a noticeable passage of his memoirs, written perhaps in a moment of depression, he speaks of learning the prayer of Polycarp, 'if it should be my lot to die a martyr.' The early part of the eighteenth century abounds in indications that amid a great deal of superficial talk about the excellence of toleration the older spirit of persecution was quite alive, ready, if circumstances favoured it, to burst forth again, not perhaps with firebrand and sword, but with the no less familiar weapons of confiscations and imprisonment. Toleration was not only very imperfectly understood, even by those who most lauded it, but it was often loudly vaunted by men whose lives and opinions were very far from recommending it. In an age notorious for laxity and profaneness, it was only too obvious that great professions of tolerance were in very many cases only the fair-sounding disguise of flippant scepticism or shallow indifference. The number of such instances made some excuse for those who so misunderstood the Christian liberalism of such men as Locke and Lord Somers, as to charge it with irreligion or even atheism.

Nevertheless the growth of toleration was one of the most conspicuous marks of the eighteenth century. If one were to judge only from the slowness of legislation in this respect, and the grudging reluctance with which it conceded to Nonconformists the first scanty instalments of complete civil freedom, or from the words and conduct of a considerable number of the clergy, or from certain fierce outbursts of mob riot against Roman Catholics, Methodists, and Jews, it might be argued that if toleration did indeed advance, it was but at tortoise speed. In reality, the advance was very great. Mosheim, writing before the middle of the century, spoke of the 'unbounded liberty' of religious thought which existed in England. Perhaps the expression was somewhat exaggerated. But in what previous age could it have been used at all without evident absurdity? Dark as was the general view which Doddridge, in his sermon on the Lisbon Earthquake, took of the sins and corruption of the age, freedom from religious oppression he considered to be the one most redeeming feature of it. The stern intolerant spirit, which for ages past had prompted multitudes, even of the kindest and most humane of men, to

regard religious error as more mischievous than crime, was not to be altogether rooted out in the course of a generation or two. But all the most influential and characteristic thought of the eighteenth century set full against it. In this one respect, the virtues and vices of the day made, it might almost be said, common cause. It might be hard to say whether its carelessness and indifference had most to do with the general growth of toleration, or its practical common sense, its professed veneration for sound reason, its love of sincerity. It is more remarkable that there was so much toleration in the last century, than that there was also so much intolerance.

A crowd of writers, of every variety of opinion, had something to write or say on the subject of Church establishments. But until the time of Priestley few ever disputed the advantages derivable from a National Church. Many would have warmly agreed with Hoadly that 'an establishment which did not allow of toleration would be a blight and a lethargy.' So long as this was conceded, scarcely any one wished that the ancient union of Church and State should be dissolved. With rare exceptions, even Nonconformists did not wish it. However much fault they might find with the existing constitution of the Church, however much they might inveigh against what they considered to be its errors, however much they might point to the abuses which deformed it, and to the uncharitable spirit of some of its clergy, they by no means desired its downfall. Probably, it is not too much to say that to some extent they were even proud of it, as the chief bulwark in Europe of the reformed faith. The Presbyterians at the beginning of the century, a declining, but still a strong body, were almost Churchmen in their support of the national communion. Doddridge, towards the middle of the century, was a hearty advocate of religious establishments. Even Watts, a more decided Dissenter than he, in a poem written in the earlier part of Queen Anne's reign, spoke as if he would be thoroughly content to see a National Church working side by side with voluntary bodies, each labouring in the way most fitted to its spirit in the common cause of religion. Mrs. Barbauld, towards the end of the century, expressed the same thought; and a great number of the more intelligent and moderate Dissenters would have agreed in it. On the general question, we are told that about the time of the Revolution of 1688 there was scarcely one Dissenter in a hundred who did not think the State was bound to use its authority in the interests of the religion of the people. Half the last century had passed before any considerable number of them had begun to think differently. John Wesley is sometimes quoted as unfavourable to the connection of Church

and State. Doubtless he did not greatly value it, and perhaps he may have used some expressions which, taken by themselves, might seem in some degree to warrant the inference just mentioned. But the love and loyalty which, all his life through, he bore towards the English Church was certainly connected not only with a high estimation of its doctrines and modes of worship, but with respect for it as the acknowledged Church of the realm. The Evangelical party in the Church were, without exception, thorough Church and State men. John Newton's 'Apologia' was, in particular, a very vigorous defence of Church establishments. During the earlier stages of the French Revolution—a period when unaccustomed thoughts of radical changes in society became very attractive to some ardent minds in every class—the party among the Dissenters who would have welcomed disestablishment received the accession of a few cultivated Churchmen. But Samuel Coleridge, Southey, and Wordsworth found reason afterwards wholly to change their views in this, as in many other respects. Furthermore, the increased radicalism of the few was more than counterbalanced by the intensified conservatism of the many. The glowing sentences in which Edmund Burke dwelt upon religion as the basis of civil society, and proclaimed the purpose of Englishmen, that, instead of quarrelling 'with establishments as some do, who have made a philosophy and a religion of their hostility to such institutions, they would cleave closely to them,' found an echo in the minds of the vast majority of his countrymen. This had been the general feeling throughout the century. With all its faults—and in many respects its condition was by no means satisfactory—the Church of England had never ceased to be popular. Sometimes it met with contumely, often with neglect; occasionally its alleged faults and shortcomings were sharply criticised, and people never ceased to relish a jest at the expense of its ministers. But they were not the least inclined to subvert an institution which had not only rooted itself into the national habits, but was felt to be the mainstay throughout the country of religion and morals. Although too often deficient in the power of evoking and sustaining the more fervent emotions of piety, it was representative to the great bulk of society of most of their aspirations towards a higher life, most of their realisations of spiritual things. It was sleepy, but it was not corrupt; it was genuine in its kind, so that the good it did was received without distrust. Nor could anyone deny that throughout the country it did an immense deal of quiet but not unrecognised good. There were few places where the general level would not have been lower without it. It had fought a good battle against Rome, and against the Deists; and the hold which, since

the middle of the century, had been gained in it by the Evangelical revival proved it not incapable of kindling with a zeal which some had begun to think was foreign to its nature. The Church, therefore, as a great national institution, was perfectly safe. Circumstances had no doubt forced a good deal of attention to its relation with the State. But these discussions had few direct practical bearings. Hence the theoretical and abstract character which they wear in the writings of Warburton and others.

In casting a general glance over the history of the English Church in the eighteenth century, it will be at once seen that there is a greater variety of incident in its earlier years than in any subsequent portion of the period. There were controversies with Rome, with Dissenters, with Nonjurors, with Arians, and above all, with Deists. There was correspondence and negotiation with the French and Swiss Reformed Churches, with German Lutherans, with French Gallicans. Schemes of comprehension, though no longer likely to be carried out, were discussed with strong feeling on either side. There was much to be said about occasional conformity, about toleration, about the relation between Church and State. There was the exciting subject of 'danger to the Church' from Rome, or from Presbyterianism, or from treason within. For there was vehement party feeling and hot discussion in ecclesiastical matters. Some looked upon the Low or Broad Church bishops as the most distinguished ornaments of the English Church; others thought that if they had their way, they would break down all the barriers of the Church, and speedily bring it to ruin. With some, High Churchmen were the only orthodox representatives of the English Church; in the eyes of others they were firebrands, Jacobites, if not Jesuits, in disguise, a greater danger to the ecclesiastical establishment than any peril from without. No doubt party feeling ran mischievously high. There was much bigotry, and much virulence. Such times, however, were more favourable to religious activity than the dull and heavy stormless days that followed. In the earlier part of the eighteenth century there were very many men worthy to be spoken of with the utmost honour, both in the High and Low Church parties. A great deal of active Christian work was set on foot about this time. Thus the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge was founded, and gathered round the table of its committee-room men of very different opinions, but all filled with the same earnest desire to promote God's glory, and to make an earnest effort to stem the irreligion of the times. From its infancy, this society did a vast deal to promote the object for which it had been established. The sister Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts attested the rise of missionary

activity. Societies for the suppression of vice, and for the reformation of public manners, sprang up in most of the large towns, and displayed a great, some thought an excessive, zeal in bringing to the bar of justice offenders against morality. Numerous associations were formed—on much the same model as that adopted in later years by the founders of the Methodist movement—of men who banded to further their mutual edification, and a more devotional life, through a constant religious observance of the ordinances and services of the Church. In many cases they made arrangements to provide public daily prayers where before there had been none, or to keep them up when otherwise they would have fallen through. Parochial libraries were organised in many parts of the kingdom, sometimes to provide religious and sound moral literature for general public use, more often to give the poorer clergy increased facilities for theological study. A most beneficent work was set on foot in the foundation of Charity Schools. During the five years which elapsed between the forming of the Christian Knowledge Society in 1699, and the first assemblage of the Metropolitan Charity School children in 1704, fifty-four schools had started in and about London alone; and their good work went on increasing. The new Churches -fifty in intention, twelve in fact—built in London and Westminster by public grant were another proof of the desire to administer to spiritual needs. Nor should mention be omitted of the provision made by Queen Anne's Bounty for the augmentation of poor livings, many of which had become miserably depauperised. By this liberal act the Queen gave up to Church uses the first fruits and tenths, which before the Reformation had been levied on the English clergy by the Pope, but from Henry VIII.'s time had swelled the income of the Crown.

The Sacheverell 'phrensy,' and the circumstances which led to the prorogation of Convocation, are less satisfactory incidents in the Church history of Queen Anne's reign. In either case we find ourselves in the very midst of that semi-ecclesiastical, semi-political strife, which is so especially jarring upon the mind, when brought into connection with the true interests of religion. In either case there is an uncomfortable feeling of being in a mob. There is little greater edification in the crowd of excited clergymen who collected in the Jerusalem Chamber, than in the medley throng which huzzaed round Westminster Hall and behind the wheels of Sacheverell's chariot. The Lower House of Convocation evidently contained a great many men who had been returned as proctors for the clergy, not so much for the higher qualifications of learning, piety, and prudence, as for the active part they took in Church politics. There were some excellent

men in it, and plenty of a kind of zeal ; but the general temper of the House was prejudiced, intemperate, and inquisitorial. The Whig bishops, on the other hand, in the Upper House were impatient of opposition, and often inconsiderate and ungracious to the lower clergy. Such, for example, were just the conditions which brought out the worse and disguised the more excellent traits of Burnet's character. It is not much to be wondered at, that many people who were very well affected to the Church thought it no great evil, but perhaps rather a good thing, that Convocation should be permanently suspended. Reason and common sense demand that a great Church should have some sort of deliberative assembly. If it were no longer what it ought to be, and the reason for this were not merely temporary, a remedy should have been found in reform, not in compelled silence. But even in the midst of the factions which disturbed its peace and hindered its usefulness, Convocation had by no means wholly neglected to deliberate on practical matters of direct religious concern. And unless its condition had been indeed degenerate, there can be little doubt that it would have materially assisted to keep up that healthy current of thought which the stagnation of Church spirit in the Georgian age so sorely needed. The history, therefore, of Convocation in Queen Anne's reign, turbulent as it was, had considerable interest of its own. So also the Sacheverell riots (for they deserve no more honourable name) have much historical value as an index of feeling. Ignorance and party faction, and a variety of such other unworthy components, entered largely into them. Yet after every abatement has been made, they showed a strength of popular attachment to the Church which is very noteworthy. The undisputed hold it had gained upon the masses ought to have been a great power for good, and it has been shown that there was about this time a good deal of genuine activity stirring in the English Church. Unhappily, those signs of activity in it decreased, instead of being enlarged and deepened. In whatever other respects during the years that followed it fulfilled some portion of its mission, it certainly lost, through its own want of energy, a great part of the influence it had enjoyed at this earlier date.

The first twenty years of the period include also a principal part of the history of the Nonjurors. Later in the century, they had entirely drifted away from any direct association with the Established Church. Their numbers had dwindled ; and as there seemed to be no longer any tangible reason for their continued schism, sympathy with them had also faded away. There are some interesting incidents in their later history, but these are more nearly related to the annals of the Episcopal Church of Scotland

than to our own. Step by step in the earlier years of the century the ties which linked them with the English Church were broken. First came the death of the venerable bishops, Ken and Frampton; then the return to the established communion of Nelson, and Dodwell, and other moderate Nonjurors; then the wilful perpetuation of the schism by the consecration of bishops; then the division into two parties of those who adopted the Communion Book of Edward VI., with its distinctive usages, and those who were opposed to any change. All this took place before 1718. By that time the schism was complete.

One more characteristic feature of the early part of the century must be mentioned. The essayists belong not only to the social history of the period, but also to that of the Church. Few preachers were so effective from their pulpits as were Addison and his fellow-contributors in the pages of the 'Spectator' and other kindred serials. It was not only in those Saturday papers which were specially devoted to graver musings that they served the cause of religion and morality. They were true sons of the Church; and if they did not go far below the surface, nor profess to do more as a rule than satirise follies and censure venial forms of vice, their tone was ever that of Christian moralists. They did no scanty service as mediators, so to say, between religion and the world. This phase of literature lived on later into the century, but it became duller and less popular. It never again was what it had been in Addison's time, and never regained more than a small fraction of the social power which it had then commanded.

After Queen Anne's reign, the main interest of English Church history rests for a time on the religious thought of the age rather than on its practice. The controversy with the Deists (which lasted for several years longer with unabated force), and that in which Waterland and Clarke were the principal figures, are discussed separately in this work. But our readers are spared the once famous Bangorian controversy. Its tedious complications are almost a by-word to those who are at all acquainted with the Church history of the period. Some of the subjects with which it dealt have ceased to be disputed questions, or no longer attract much interest. Above all, its course was clouded and confused by verbal misunderstandings, arising in part, perhaps, from the occasional prolixity of Hoadly's style, but chiefly from the distorting influence of strong prejudices.

It is unquestionable that Hoadly's influence upon his generation was great. Some, looking upon the defects of the period that followed, have thought of that influence as distinctly injurious. They have considered that it strongly conduced to a

negligent belief and indifference to the specific doctrines of Christian faith, making men careless of truth, so long as they thought themselves to be sincere; also that it loosened the hold of the Church on the people by impairing respect for authority, and by tending to reduce all varieties of Christian faith to one equal level. It is a charge which has some foundation. The religious characteristics of the age, whatever they were, were independent in the main of anything the Whig bishop did or wrote. Still, he was one of those representative men who give form and substance to a great deal of floating thought. He caught the ear of the public, and engrossed an attention which was certainly very remarkable. In this character as a leader of religious thought he was deficient in some very essential points. He was too much of a controversialist, and his tone was too political. There was more light than heat in what he wrote. So long as it was principally a question of right reason, of sincerity, or of justice, he deserved much praise, and did much good. In all the qualities which give fire, energy, enthusiasm, he was wanting. The form in which his religion was cast might suit some natures, but was too cold and dispassionate for general use. It fell in only too well with the prevailing tendencies of the times. It might promote, under favouring circumstances, a kind of piety which could be genuine, reflective, and deeply impressed by many of the divine attributes, but which, in most cases, would need to be largely reinforced by other properties not so easily to be found in Hoadly's writings—tenderness, imagination, sympathy, practical activity, spiritual intensity.

The rise and advance of Methodism, and its relationship with the English Church, is a subject of very great interest, and one that has occupied the attention of many writers. In these papers it has been chiefly discussed as one of the two principal branches of the general Evangelical movement.

Treatises on the evidences of Christianity constitute a principal part of the theological literature of the eighteenth century. No systematic record of the religious history of that period could omit a careful survey of what was said and thought on a topic which absorbed so great an amount of interest. But if the subject is not entered into at length, a writer upon it can do little more than repeat what has already been concisely and comprehensively told in Mr. Pattison's well-known essay. The authors, therefore, of this work have felt that they might be dispensed from devoting to it a separate chapter. Many incidental remarks, however, which have a direct bearing upon the search into evidences will be found scattered here and there in the course of this work. The controversy with the Deists necessitated a perpetual

ence to the grounds upon which belief is based both in the Christian revelation, and in those fundamental truths of natural religion upon which arguers on either side were agreed. A great deal also, which in the eighteenth century was proscribed under the name of 'enthusiasm' was nothing else in reality than an appeal of the soul of man to the evidence of God's spirit within him to facts which cannot be grasped by any mere intellectual power. By the greater part of the writers of that period all reference to an inward light of spiritual discernment was regarded with utter distrust as an illusion and a snare. From the beginning to the end of the century, theological thought was mainly concentrated on the effort to make use of reason—God's plain and universal gift to man—as the one divinely appointed instrument for the discovery or investigation of all truth. The examination of evidences, although closely connected with the Deistical controversy, was nevertheless independent of it. Horror of fanaticism, distrust of authority, an increasing neglect of the earlier history of Christianity, the comparative cessation of minor disputes, and the greater emancipation of reason through the recent Act of Toleration, all combined to encourage it. Besides this, physical science was making great strides. The revolution of ideas effected by Newton's great discovery made a strangely wide gap between seventeenth and eighteenth century modes of thinking and speaking on many points connected with the material universe. It was felt more or less clearly by most thinking men that the relations of theology to the things of outward sense needed readjustment. Newton himself, like his contemporaries, Boyle, Flamsteed, and Halley, was a thoroughly religious man, and his general faith as a Christian was confirmed rather than weakened by his perception of the vast laws which had become disclosed to him. On many others the first effect was different. Either they were impressed with exorbitant ideas of the majesty of that faculty of reasoning which could thus transcend the bounds of all earthly space, or else the sense of a higher spiritual life was overpowered by the revelation of uniform physical laws operating through a seeming infinite expanse of material existence. The one cause tended to create a notion that unassisted reason was sufficient for all human needs; the other developed a frequent bias to materialism. Both alike rendered it imperative to earnest minds that felt competent to the task to inquire what reason had to say about the nature of our spiritual life, and the principles and religious motives which chiefly govern it. Difficulties arising out of man's position as a part of universal nature had scarcely been felt before. Nor even in the last century did they assume the proportions they have

since attained. But they deserve to be largely taken into account in any review of the evidence writers of that period. Not to speak of Derham's 'Physico-Theology' and other works of that class, neither Berkeley, Butler, nor Paley—three great names—can be properly understood without reference to the greatly increased attention which was being given to the physical sciences. Berkeley's suggestive philosophy was distinctly based upon an earnest wish to release the essence of all theology from an embarrassing dependence upon the outward world of sense. Butler's 'Analogy'—by far the greatest theological work of the century—aims throughout at creating a strong sense of the unity and harmony which subsists between the operations of God's providence in the material world of nature, and in that inner spiritual world which finds its chiefmost exposition in Revelation. Paley's 'Natural Theology,' though not the most valuable, is by no means the least interesting of his works, and was intended by him to stand in the same relation to natural, as his 'Evidences' to revealed religion.

The evidence writers did a great work, not lightly to be disparaged. The results of their labours were not of a kind to be very perceptible on the surface, and are therefore particularly liable to be under-estimated. There was neither show nor excitement in the gradual process by which Christianity regained throughout the country the confidence which for a time had been most evidently shaken. Proofs and evidences had been often dinned into careless ears without much visible effect, and often before weary listeners, to whom the great bulk of what they heard was unintelligible and profitless. Very often in the hands of well-intentioned, but uninstructed and narrow-minded men, fallacious or thoroughly inconclusive arguments had been confidently used, to the detriment rather than to the advantage of the cause they had at heart. But at the very least, a certain acquiescence in the 'reasonableness of Christianity,' and a respect for its teaching, had been secured which could hardly be said to have been generally the case about the time when Bishop Butler began to write. Meanwhile the revived ardour of religion which had sprung up among Methodists and Evangelicals, and which at the end of the century was stirring, in different forms but with the same spirit, in the hearts of some of the most cultivated and intellectual of our countrymen, was a greater practical witness to the living power of Christianity than all other evidences.

In quite the early part of the period with which these chapters deal there was, as we have seen, a considerable amount of active and hopeful work in the Church of England. The same may be said of its closing years. The Evangelical movement had

done good even in quarters where it had been looked upon with disfavour. A better care for the religious education of the masses, an increased attention to Church missions, the foundation of new religious societies, greater parochial activity, improvement in the style of sermons, a disposition on the part of Parliament to reform some glaring Church abuses—all showed that a stir and movement had begun, which might be slow to make any great advance, but which was at all events promising for the future. Agitation against slavery had been in great part a result of quickened Christian feeling, and, in a still greater degree, a promoting cause of it. And when the French Revolution broke out, it quickly appeared how resolutely bent the vast majority of the people were to hold all the more firmly to their Christianity and their Church. Some of the influences which in the early part of the century had done so much to counteract the religious promise of the time, were no longer, or no longer in the same degree, actively at work. There was cause, therefore, for confident hope that the good work which had begun might go on increasing. How far this was the case, and what agencies contributed to hinder or advance religious life in the Church of England and elsewhere, belongs to the history of a time yet nearer to our own.

Bishops, both as fathers of the Church and as holding high places, and living therefore in the presence of the public, cannot, without grave injury not to themselves only, but to the body over which they preside, suffer their names to be in any way mixed up with the cabals of self-interest and faction. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Episcopal bench numbered among its occupants many men, both of High and Low Church views, who were distinctly eminent for piety, activity, and learning. And throughout the century there were always some bishops who were thoroughly worthy of their high post. But towards the middle of it, and on to its very close, there was an undoubted lowering in the general tone of the Episcopal order. Average men, who had succeeded in making themselves agreeable at Court, or who had shown that they could be of political service to the administration of the time, too often received a mitre for their reward. Amid the general relaxation of principle which by the universal confession of all contemporary writers had pervaded society, even worthy and good men seem to have condescended at times to a discreditable fulsomeness of manner, and to an immoderate thirst for preferments. There were many scandals in the Church which greatly needed reform, but none which were so keenly watched, or which did so much to lower its reputation, as unworthy acts of subserviency

on the part of certain bishops. The evil belonged to the individuals and to the period, not by any means to the system of a National Church. Yet those who disapproved of that system found no illustration more practically effective to illustrate their argument.

Throughout the whole of the eighteenth century, almost all writers who had occasion to speak of the general condition of society joined in one wail of lament over the irreligion and immorality that they saw around them. This complaint was far too universal to mean little more than a general, and somewhat conventional tirade upon the widespread corruption of human nature. The only doubt is whether it might not in some measure have arisen out of a keener perception, on the part of the more cultivated and thoughtful portion of society, of brutal habits which in coarser ages had been passed over with far less comment. Perhaps also greater liberty of thought and speech caused irreligion to take a more avowed and visible form. Yet even if the severe judgment passed by contemporary writers upon the spiritual and moral condition of their age may be fairly qualified by some such considerations, it must certainly be allowed that religion and morality were, generally speaking, at a lower ebb than they have been at many other periods. For this the National Church must take a full share, but not more than a full share, of responsibility. The causes which elevate or depress the general tone of society have a corresponding influence, in kind if not in degree, upon the whole body of the clergy. Church history, throughout its whole course, shows very clearly that although the average level of their spiritual and moral life has always been, except, possibly, in certain very exceptional times, higher in some degree than that of the people over which they are set as pastors, yet that this level ordinarily rises or sinks with the general condition of Christianity in the Church and country at large. If, for instance, a corrupt state of politics have lowered the standard of public virtue, and have widely introduced into society the unblushing avowal of self-seeking motives, which in better times would be everywhere reprobated, the edge of principle is likely to become somewhat blunted even where it might be least expected. In the last century unworthy acts were sometimes done by men who were universally held in high honour and esteem, which would most certainly not have been thought of by those same persons if they had lived in our own day. The national clergy, taken as they are from the general mass of educated society, are sure to share very largely both in the merits and defects of the class from which they come. Except under some strong impulse, they are not likely, as a body, to assume a very much higher

tone, or a very much greater degree of spiritual activity, than that which they had been accustomed to in all their earlier years. It was so with the clergy of the eighteenth century. Their general morality and propriety was never impeached, and their lives were for the most part formed on a higher standard than that of most of the people among whom they dwelt. But they were (speaking again generally) not nearly active enough ; the spiritual inertness which clung over the face of the country prevailed also among them. Although, therefore, the Church retained the respect and to a certain extent the affection of the people, it fell evidently short in the Divine work entrusted to it.

C. J. A.

CHAPTER II.

ROBERT NELSON, HIS FRIENDS, AND CHURCH PRINCIPLES.

High Churchmanship, as it was commonly understood in Queen Anne's reign, did not possess many attractive features. Its nobler and more spiritual elements were sadly obscured amid the angry strife of party warfare, and all that was hard, or worldly, or intolerant in it was thrust into exaggerated prominence. Indeed, the very terms 'High' and 'Low' Church must have become odious in the ears of good men who heard them bandied to and fro like the merest watchwords of political faction. It is a relief to turn from the noise and virulence with which so-called Church principles were contested in Parliament and Convocation, in lampoons and pamphlets, in taverns and coffee-houses, from Harley and Bolingbroke, from Swift, Atterbury, and Sacheverell, to a set of High Churchmen, belonging rather to the former than to the existing generation, whose names were not mixed up with these contentions, and whose pure and primitive piety did honour to the Church which had nurtured such faithful and worthy sons. If, at the opening of the eighteenth century, the English Church derived its chief lustre from the eminent qualities of some of the Broad Church bishops, it must not be forgotten that it was also adorned with the virtues of men of a very different order of thought, as represented by Ken and Nelson, Bull and Beveridge. Some of them, it is true, had been unable to take the oaths to the recently established Government, and were therefore, as by a kind of accident, excluded, if not from the services, at all events from the ministry of the National Church. But none as yet ventured to deny that, saving the question of political allegiance, they were thoroughly loyal alike to its doctrine and its order.

It is proposed in this chapter to make Robert Nelson the central figure, and to group around him some of the most distinguished of his Juror and Nonjuror friends. A special charm lingers around the memory of Bishop Ken, but his name can scarcely be made prominent in any sketch which deals only with the eighteenth century. He lived indeed through its first decade, but his active life was over before it began. Nelson, on the other hand, though he survived him by only four years, took an active part throughout Queen Anne's reign in every scheme of Church enterprise. He was a link, too, between those who accepted and those who declined the oaths. Even as a member of the Nonjuring communion he was intimately associated with many leading Churchmen of the Establishment ; and when, to his great gratification, he felt that he could again with an easy conscience attend the services of his parish church, the ever-widening gap that had begun to open was in his case no hindrance to familiar intercourse with his old Nonjuring friends.

Greatly as Robert Nelson was respected and admired by his contemporaries, no complete record of his life was published until the present century. His friend Dr. Francis Lee, author of the 'Life of Kettlewell,' had taken the work on hand, but was prevented by death from carrying it out. There are now, however, three or four biographies of him, especially the full and interesting memoir published in 1860 by Mr. Secretan. It is needless, therefore, to go over ground which has already been completely traversed ; a few notes only of the chief dates and incidents of his life may be sufficient to introduce the subject.

Robert Nelson was born in 1656. In his early boyhood he was at St. Paul's School, but the greater part of his education was received under the guidance of Mr. Bull, afterwards Bishop of St. Davids, by whose life and teaching he was profoundly influenced. The biography of his distinguished tutor occupied the labour of his last years, and was no doubt a grateful offering to the memory of a man to whom he owed many of his best impressions. About 1679 he went to London, where he became intimate with Tillotson, then Dean of Canterbury. In later years this intimacy was somewhat interrupted by great divergence of views on theological and ecclesiastical subjects ; but a strong feeling of mutual respect remained, and, in his last illness, Tillotson was nursed by his friend with the most affectionate love, and died in his arms. In 1680 Nelson went to France with Halley, his old schoolfellow and fellow member of the Royal Society, and during their journey watched with his friend the celebrated comet which bears Halley's name. While in Paris he received the offer of a place in Charles II.'s Court, but took the advice of Tillotson, who

said he should be glad 'if England were so happy as that the Court might be a fit place for him to live in.'[1] He therefore declined the offer, and travelled on to Rome, where he made the acquaintance of Lady Theophila Lucy and married her the next year. It was no light trouble to him that on their return to London she avowed herself a Romanist. Cardinal Howard at Rome, and Bossuet at Paris, had gained her over to their faith, and with the ardour of a proselyte she even entered, on the Roman side, into the great controversy of the day. Robert Nelson himself was entirely unaffected by the current which just at this time seemed to have set in in favour of Rome. He maintained, indeed, a cordial friendship with Bossuet, but was not shaken by his arguments, and in 1688 published, as his first work, a treatise against transubstantiation. Though controversy was little to his taste, these were times when men of earnest conviction could scarcely avoid engaging in it.[2] Nelson valued the name of Protestant next only to that of Catholic, and was therefore drawn almost necessarily into taking some part in the last great dispute with Rome.[3] But polemics would be deprived of their gall of bitterness if combatants joined in the strife with as much charity and generosity of feeling as he did.[4]

From the first Nelson felt himself unable to transfer his allegiance to the new Government. The only question in his mind was whether he could consistently join in Church services in which public prayers were offered in behalf of a prince whose claims he utterly repudiated. He consulted Archbishop Tillotson on the point ; and his old friend answered with all candour that if his opinions were so decided that he was verily persuaded such a prayer was sinful, there could be no doubt as to what he should do. Upon this he at once joined the Nonjuring communion. He remained in it for nearly twenty years, on terms of cordial intimacy with most of its chief leaders. When, however, in 1709, Lloyd, the deprived Bishop of Norwich, died, Nelson wrote to Ken, now the sole survivor of the Nonjuring bishops, and asked whether he claimed his allegiance to him as his rightful spiritual father. As regards the State prayers, time had modified his views. He retained his Jacobite principles, but considered that non-concurrence in certain petitions in the service did not necessitate a prolonged breach of Church unity. Ken, who had welcomed the accession of his friend Hooper to the see of Bath and Wells, and who no longer subscribed himself under his old

[1] Birch's *Life of Tillotson*, lxi.
[2] Ken and a few others are conspicuous as exceptions.
[3] W. H. Teale, *Life of Nelson*, 221.
[4] Dr. S. Clarke called him a model controversialist. Teale, 330.

episcopal title, gave a glad consent, for he also longed to see the schism healed. Nelson accordingly, with Dodwell and other moderate Nonjurors, rejoined the communion of the National Church.

It is much to Robert Nelson's honour that in an age of strong party animosities he never suffered his political predilections to stand in the way of union for any benevolent purpose. He had taken an active interest in the religious associations of young men which sprang up in London and other towns and villages about 1678, a time when the zeal of many attached members of the Church of England was quickened by the dangers which were besetting it. A few years later, when 'Societies for the Reformation of Manners' were formed, to check the immorality and profaneness which was gaining alarming ground, he gave his hearty co-operation both to Churchmen and Dissenters in a movement which he held essential to the welfare of the country. Although a Jacobite and Nonjuror, he was enrolled, with not a few of the most distinguished Churchmen of the day, among the earliest members of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge at its formation in 1699; and long before his re-entering into the Established communion we find him not only a constant attendant, but sometimes chairman at its weekly meetings. He took a leading part in the organisation of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, in 1701, and sat at its board in friendly conference with Burnet and many another whose very names were odious to his Nonjuring friends. And great as his disappointment must have been at the frustration of Jacobite hopes in the quiet accession of George I., the interest and honourable pride which he felt in the London charity schools so far triumphed over his political prejudices that he found pleasure in marshalling four thousand of the children to witness the new sovereign's entry, and to greet him with the psalm which bids the King rejoice in the strength of the Lord and be exceeding glad in His salvation.

In such works as these—to which must be added his labours as a commissioner in 1710 for the erection of new churches in London, his efforts for the promotion of parochial and circulating clerical libraries throughout the kingdom, for advancing Christian teaching in grammar schools, for improving prisons, for giving help to French Protestants in London and Eastern Christians in Armenia—Robert Nelson found abundant scope for the beneficent energies of his public life. The undertakings he carried out were but a few of the projects which engaged his thoughts. If we cast our eyes over the proposed institutions which he commended to the notice of the influential and the rich, it is surprising to see in how many directions he anticipated the philanthropical ideas of

the age in which we live. Ophthalmic and consumptive hospitals, and hospitals for the incurable; ragged schools; penitentiaries; homes for destitute infants; associations of gentlewomen for charitable and religious purposes; theological, training, and missionary colleges; houses for temporary religious retirement and retreat—such were some of the designs which, had he lived a few years longer, he would certainly have attempted to carry into execution.[1]

He was no less active with his pen in efforts aimed at infusing an earnest spirit of practical piety, and bringing home to men's thoughts an appreciative feeling of the value of Church ordinances. He published his 'Practice of True Devotion' in 1698, an excellent work, which attracted little attention when it first came out, but reached at least its twenty-second edition before the next century was completed. His treatise on the 'Christian Sacrifice' appeared in 1706, his 'Life of Bishop Bull' in 1713; but it is by his 'Festivals and Fasts' that his name has been made familiar to every succeeding generation of Churchmen. Its catechetical form, and the somewhat formal composure of its style, did not strike past readers as defects. It certainly was in high favour among English Churchmen generally. Dr. Johnson said of it in 1776 that he understood it to have the greatest sale of any book ever printed in England except the Bible.[2] In the first four years and a half after its issue from the press more than 10,000 copies were printed.[3]

Robert Nelson died in the January of 1715, a man so universally esteemed that it would be probably impossible to find his name connected in any writer with a single word of disparagement. It would be folly to speak of one thus distinguished by singular personal qualities as if he were, to any great extent, representative of a class. If the Church of England had been adorned during Queen Anne's reign by many such men, it could never have been said of it that it failed to take advantage of the signal opportunities then placed within its reach. Yet his views on all Church questions, and many of the characteristic features of his character, were shared by many of his friends both in the Established Church and among the Nonjurors. He survived almost all of them, so that with him the type seemed nearly to pass away for a length of time, as if the spiritual atmosphere of the eighteenth century were uncongenial to it. His younger acquaintances in the Nonjuring body, however sincere and

[1] See his *Address to Persons of Quality*, and *Representation of the several Ways of doing Good*. Secretan, 149. Teale, 338.

[2] *Life*, by Boswell, ii. 457.

[3] G. G. Perry, *History of the Church of England*, iii. 140.

generous in temperament, were men of a different order. It was but natural that, as the schism became more pronounced and Jacobite hopes more desperate, the Church views of a dwindling minority should become continually narrower, and lose more and more of those larger sympathies which can scarcely be altogether absent in any section of a great national Church.

First in order among Nelson's friends—not in intimacy, but in the affectionate honour with which he always remembered him—must be mentioned Bishop Ken. He was living in retirement at Longleat; but Nelson must have frequently met him at the house of their common friend Mr. Cherry of Shottisbrooke,[1] and they occasionally corresponded. Nelson may have been the more practical, Ken the more meditative. The one was still in the full vigour of his benevolent activity while the other was waiting for rest, and soothing with sacred song the pains which told of coming dissolution. In his own words, to 'contemplate, hymn, love, joy, obey,' was the tranquil task which chiefly remained for him on earth. But they were congenial in their whole tone of thought. Their views on the disputed questions of the day very nearly coincided. Nelson, as might be expected of a layman who throughout his life had seen much of good men of all opinions, was the more tolerant; but both were kindly and charitable towards those from whom they most differed, and both were attached with such deep loyalty of love to the Church in whose bosom they had been nurtured that they desired nothing more than to see what they believed to be its genuine principles fully carried out, and could neither sympathise with nor understand religious feelings which looked elsewhere for satisfaction. Both were unaffectedly devout, without the least tinge of moroseness or gloom. Nelson specially delighted in Ken's morning, evening, and midnight hymns. He entreated his readers to charge their memory with them. 'The daily repeating of them will make you perfect in them, and the good fruit of them will abide with you all your days.'[2] He subjoined them to his 'Practice of True Devotion;' and Samuel Wesley tells us that he personally knew how much he delighted in them. It was with these that—

> He oft, when night with holy hymns was worn,
> Prevented prime and wak'd the rising morn.[3]

He has made use of many of Ken's prayers, together with some from Taylor, Kettlewell, and Hickes, in his 'Companion for the

[1] Secretan, 50, 71.

[2] *Practice of True Devotion*, 28.

[3] S. Wesley's poem on R. Nelson, prefixed to some editions of the *Practice, &c.* He adds in a note that this was a personal reminiscence of his friend.

Festivals and Fasts.' There is an intensity and effusion of spirit in them, in which his own more studied compositions are somewhat wanting.

Among the other Nonjuring bishops Nelson was acquainted with, but not very intimately, were Sancroft and Frampton. The former he loved and admired ; and spoke very highly of his learning and wisdom, his prudent zeal for the honour of God, his piety and self-denying integrity.[1] The little weaknesses and gentle intolerances of the good old man were not such as he would censure, nor would he be altogether out of sympathy with them. Bishop Frampton was in a manner an hereditary friend. He had gone out to Aleppo as a young man, half a century before, in capacity of chaplain of the Levant Company, at the urgent recommendation of John Nelson, father of Robert,[2] who had the highest opinion of his merits. From his cottage at Standish in Gloucestershire, where he had retired after his deprivation, he occasionally wrote to Robert Nelson, and must have often heard of him from John Kettlewell, the intimate and very valued friend of both. He was a man who could not fail to be esteemed[3] and loved by all who had the privilege of his acquaintance. He had been a preacher of great fame, whom people crowded to hear. Pepys said of him that 'he preached most like an apostle that he ever heard man ;'[4] and Evelyn, noting in his diary that he had been to hear him, calls him 'a pious and holy man, excellent in the pulpit for moving the affections.' His letters, of which several remain, written to Ken, Lloyd, and Sancroft, about the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, give the idea of a man of unaffected humility and simple piety, of a happy, kindly disposition, and full of spirit and innocent mirth. Though he could not take the oaths, he regularly communicated at the parish church.[5] Controversy he abhorred ; it seemed to him, he said to Kettlewell, as if the one thing needful were scarcely heard, amidst the din and clashings of *pros* and *cons*, and he wished the men of war, the disputants, would follow his friend's example, and beat their swords and spears into ploughshares and pruning hooks.[6]

[1] Nelson's *Life of Bull*, 303. [2] Secretan, 2.

[3] 'A man,' says his biographer, 'of singular earnestness, honesty, and practical ability, who was never wanting in times of danger, and never hesitated to discharge his duty at the cost of worldly advantage.'—*Life of Frampton*, by T. S. Evans. Preface, x.

[4] Quoted in *Life of Ken*, by a Layman, 753.

[5] And even, by the permission of the Bishop of London, assisted in the service.—*Evans*, 208.

[6] Frampton to Kettlewell. *Life of Kettlewell*, App. No. 18.

John Kettlewell died in 1695, to Nelson's great loss, for he was indeed a bosom friend. Nelson had unreservedly entrusted him with his schemes for doing good, his literary projects, his spiritual perplexities, and 'the nicest and most difficult emergencies of his life; such an opinion had he of his wisdom, as well as of his integrity.'[1] More than once, observes Dr. Lee, he said how much gratitude he owed to Kettlewell for his good influence, sometimes in animating him to stand out boldly in the cause of religion, sometimes in concerting with him schemes of benevolence, sometimes in suggesting what he could best write in the service of the Church. They planned out together the 'Companion for the Festivals and Fasts;' they encouraged one another in that gentler mode of conducting controversy which must have seemed like mere weakness to many of the inflamed partisans of the period. Nelson proposed to preserve the memory of his friend in a biography. He carefully collected materials for the purpose, and though he had not leisure to carry out his design, was of great assistance to Francis Lee in the life which was eventually written.[2]

Bishop Ken used to speak of Kettlewell in terms of the highest reverence and esteem. In a letter to Nelson, acknowledging the receipt of some of Kettlewell's sermons, which his correspondent had lately edited, he calls their author 'as saintlike a man as ever I knew;'[3] and when, in 1696, he was summoned before the Privy Council to give account for a pastoral letter drawn up by the nonjuring bishops on behalf of the deprived clergy, he spoke of it as having been first proposed by 'Mr. Kettlewell, that holy man who is now with God.'[4] There can be no doubt he well merited the admiration of his friends. Perhaps the most beautiful element in his character was his perfect guilelessness and transparent truth. Almost his last words, addressed to his nephew, were 'not to tell a lie, no, not to save a world, not to save your King nor yourself.'[5] He had lived fully up to the spirit of this rule. Anything like show and pretence, political shifts and evasions, dissimulations for the sake of safety or under an idea of doing good—'acting,' as he expressed it, 'deceitfully for God, and breaking religion to preserve religion,' were things he would never in the smallest degree condescend to. In no case would he allow that a jocose or conventional departure from accuracy was justifiable, and even if a nonjuring friend, under the displeasure, as might often be, of Government, assumed a disguise, he was uneasy and annoyed, and declined to call him

[1] *Life of Kettlewell*, p. 169.
[2] Id. 162, Secretan, 61.
[3] *Life of Kettlewell*, App. No. 25.
[4] *Life of Ken*, by a Layman, 676.
[5] *Life of Kettlewell*, 176.

by his fictitious name.[1] Happily, perhaps, for his peace of mind, his steady purpose 'to follow truth wherever he might find it,'[2] without respect of persons or fear of consequences, though it led to a sacrifice, contentedly, and even joyfully borne, of worldly means, led him no tittle astray from the ancient paths of orthodoxy. Like most High Churchmen of his day, he held most exaggerated views as to the duty of passive obedience, a doctrine which he held to be vitally connected with the whole spirit of Christian religion. He sorely lamented 'the great and grievous breach' caused by the nonjuring separation,[3] and earnestly trusted that a time of healing and reunion might speedily arrive; and though he adhered staunchly to the communion of the deprived bishops, whom he held to be the only rightful fathers of the Church, and believed that there alone he could find 'orthodox and holy ministrations,'[4] he never for an instant supposed that he separated himself thereby from the Church of England, in which, he said in his dying declaration, 'as he had lived and ministered, so he still continued firm in its faith, worship, and communion.'[5] Such was Kettlewell, a thorough type of the very best of the Nonjurors, a man so kindly and large-hearted in many ways, and so open to conviction, that the term bigoted would be harshly applied to him, but whose ideas ran strongly and deeply in a narrow channel. He lived a life unspotted from the world; nor was there any purer and more fervent spirit in the list of those whose active services were lost to the Church of England by the new oath of allegiance.

Henry Dodwell was another of Robert Nelson's most esteemed friends. After the loss of his Camdenian Professorship of History, he lived among his nonjuring acquaintances at Shottisbrooke, immersed in abstruse studies. His profound learning—for he was acknowledged to be one of the most learned men in Europe[6]—especially his thorough familiarity with all precedents drawn from patristic antiquity, made him a great authority in the perplexities which from time to time divided the Nonjurors. It was mainly to him that Nelson owed his return to the established Communion. Dodwell had been very ardent against the oaths; when he conceived the possibility of Ken's accepting them, he had written him a long letter of anxious remonstrance; he had written another letter of indignant concern to Sherlock, on

[1] Id. pp. 95, 182. [2] Id. 14. [3] Id. 172.
[4] Id. 134. [5] Id. 172.
[6] Hearne said of him, 'I take him to be the greatest scholar in Europe, when he died; but what exceeds that, his piety and sanctity were beyond compare.'—June 15, 1711, p. 228.

news of his intended compliance.[1] But his special standing point was based upon the argument that it was schism of the worst order to side with bishops who had been intruded by mere lay authority into sees which had other rightful occupiers. When, therefore, this hindrance no longer existed, he was of opinion that political differences, however great, should be no bar to Church Communion, and that the State prayers were no insurmountable difficulty. Nelson gladly agreed, and the bells of Shottisbrooke rang merrily when he and Dodwell, and the other Nonjurors resident in that place, returned to the parish church.[2]

Dodwell is a well-known example of the extravagances of opinion into which a student may be led, who, in perfect seclusion from the world, follows up his views unguided by practical considerations. Greatly as his friends respected his judgment on all points of precedent and authority, they readily allowed he had more of the innocency of the dove than the wisdom of the serpent.[3] His faculties were in fact over-burdened with the weight of his learning, and his published works, which followed one another in quick succession, contained eccentricities, strange to the verge of madness. A layman himself, he held views as to the dignities and power of the priesthood, of which the 'Tatler'[4] might well say that Rome herself had never forged such chains for the consciences of the laity as he would have imposed. Starting upon an assumption, common to him with many whose general theological opinions he was most averse to, that the Divine counsels were wholly beyond the sphere of human faculties, and unimpeded therefore by any consideration of reason in his inferences from Scripture and primitive antiquity, he advanced a variety of startling theories, which created some dismay among his friends, and gave endless opportunity to his opponents. Much that he has written sounds far more like a grave caricature of high sacerdotalism, after the manner of De Foe's satires on intolerance, than the sober conviction of an earnest man.[5] It is needless to dwell on crotchets for which, as Dr. Hunt properly observes, nobody was responsible but himself.[6] Ken, who had great respect for him—'the excellent' Mr. Dodwell, as he calls him—remarked of his strange ideas on the immortality of the soul, that he built high on feeble foundations, and would not have many proselytes to his hypotheses.[7] The same might be

[1] *Life of Ken*, by a Layman, 540.
[2] *Reliq. Hearnianæ*, 1710, March 4, p. 188.
[3] Brokesby's *Life of Dodwell*, 534.
[4] No. 187.
[5] Brokesby's *Life of Dodwell*, chap. x. 73.
[6] Hunt, J., *Religious Thought in England*, ii. 85.
[7] *Life of Ken*, by a Layman, 705.

said of much else that he wrote on theological subjects. As for nonjuring principles, he was so wedded to them that he could see nothing but deadly schism outside the fold over which 'our late invalidly deprived fathers' presided. It only, as orthodox and unschismatic, 'was entitled to have its communions and excommunications ratified in heaven.'[1] No wonder he longed to see union restored, that so he might die in peace.[2]

With the ever understood proviso that they could not fall in with many of his views, Nelson and most of his friends loved Mr. Dodwell and were proud of him. They admired his great learning, his fervent and ascetic piety, his deep attachment to the doctrine and usages of the English Church, and many attractive features in personal character. 'He was a faithful and sincere friend,' says Hearne, 'very charitable to the poor (notwithstanding the narrowness of his fortune), free and open in his discourse and conversation (which he always managed without the least personal reflection), courteous and affable to all people, facetious upon all proper occasions, and ever ready to give his counsel and advice, and extremely communicative of his great knowledge.'[3] Although a man of retiring habits and much personal humility, he was bold as a lion when occasion demanded, and never hesitated to sacrifice interest of any kind to his sincere, but often strangely contracted ideas of truth and duty. It was his lot to suffer loss of goods under either king, James II. and William. Under the former he not only lost the rent of his Irish estates,[4] but had his name[5] on the murderous act of attainder to which James, to his great disgrace, attached his signature in 1689. Under the latter he was deprived of his preferment in Oxford, and under a harsher rule might have incurred yet graver penalties. 'He has set his heart,' said William of him, 'on being a martyr, and I have set mine on disappointing him.'[6] He died at Shottisbrooke in 1711.

After Kettlewell's death, no one was so intimate with Robert Nelson as Dr. George Hickes. They lived near together[7] in Ormond Street, and for the last eleven years of Nelson's life met almost daily. In forming any estimate of Hickes's character, the warm-hearted esteem with which Nelson regarded him[8] should not be lost sight of. Whatever were his faults, he must have possessed many high qualities to have thus completely won

[1] Dodwell's *Append. to Case in View, now in Fact*, and his *On Occasional Communion, Life*, pp. 474 and 419.
[2] *Life of Kettlewell*, 128.
[3] Quoted in Brokesby's *Life of Dodwell*, 546.
[4] Id. 541.
[5] Macaulay's *History of England*, chap. 12.
[6] Id.
[7] Secretan, 63.
[8] Nelson's *Life of Bull*, 439.

the heart of so good a man. The feeling was fully reciprocated ; and those who knew with what intensity of blind zeal Hickes attached himself to the interests of his party, must have been surprised that this intimacy was not interrupted even by his sore disappointment at Nelson's defection from the nonjuring communion. In Hickes there was nothing of the calm and tempered judgment which ruled in Nelson's mind. From the day that he vacated his deanery, and fixed up his indignant protest in Worcester Cathedral,[1] he threw his heart and soul into the nonjuring cause. Unity might be a blessing, and schism a disaster ; but it is doubtful whether he would have made the smallest concession in order to attain the one, or avoid the other. Even Bishop Ken said of him that he showed zeal to make the schism incurable.[2] A good man, and a scholar of rare erudition, he possessed nevertheless the true temper of a bigot. In middle life he had been brought into close acquaintance with the fanatic extravagances of Scotch Covenanters, his aversion to which might seem to have taught him, not the excellence of a more temperate spirit, but the desirability of rushing toward similar extremes in an opposite direction. He delighted in controversy in proportion to its heat, and too often his pen was dipped in gall, when he directed the acuteness and learning which none denied to him against any who swerved, this way or that, from the narrow path of dogma and discipline which had been marked with his own approval. Tillotson was 'an atheist,'[3] freethinkers were 'the first-born sons of Satan,' the Established Church was 'fallen into mortal schism,'[4] Ken, for thinking of reunion, was 'a half-hearted wheedler,'[5] Roman Catholics were 'as gross idolaters as Egyptian worshippers of leeks,'[6] Nonconformists were 'fanatics,' Quakers were 'blasphemers.'[7] From the peaceful researches, on which he built a lasting name, in Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian antiquities, he returned each time with renewed zest to polemical disputes, and found relaxation in the strife of words. It was no promising omen for the future of the nonjuring party, that the Court of St. Germains should have appointed him and Wagstaffe first bishops of that Communion. The consecration was kept for several years a close secret, and Robert Nelson himself may probably have been ignorant[8] of the high dignity to which 'my neighbour the Dean' had attained.

[1] *Life of Kettlewell*, App. No. 3.
[2] *Life of Ken*, &c., 718.
[3] Hunt, ii. 375.
[4] Letter to Nelson. *Life of Bull*, 441.
[5] *Life of Ken*, &c., 719.
[6] Hunt, ii. 76.
[7] Hickes, 9, *Enthusiasm Exorcised*, 64.
[8] Lathbury's *History of the Nonjurors*, 216. Seward speaks of him as 'this learned prelate.'—*Anecdotes of Distinguished Persons*, 250.

One other of Nelson's nonjuring friends must be mentioned. Francis Lee, a physician, had been a Fellow of St. John's, Oxford, but was deprived for declining the oaths. At the end of the seventeenth century, after travelling abroad, he joined [1] one of those societies of mystics which at that time abounded throughout Europe. A long correspondence with Dodwell ensued, and convinced at last that he had been in error, he not only left the brotherhood and its presiding 'prophetess' (it appears to have been a society of a somewhat fanatical order), but published in 1709, under the title of 'A History of Montanism, by a Lay Gentleman,' a work directed against fanaticism in general. He writes it in the tone of one who has lately recovered from a sort of mental fever which may break out in anyone, and sometimes becomes epidemic, inflaming and throwing into disorder certain obscure impulses which are common to all human nature.[2] He became intimate with Nelson, and subscribes one of his letters to him, 'To the best of friends, from the most affectionate of friends.'[3] He helped him in his devotional publications; took in hand, at his instigation, and from materials which Nelson and Hickes had collected, the life of Kettlewell; and took an active part in furthering the benevolent schemes in which his friend was so deeply interested. It was he who suggested [4] to him the founding of charity schools after the model of the far-famed orphanage and other educational institutions lately established by Francke and Spener at Halle, the centre of German pietism. In other ways we see favourable traces of his earlier mystical associations. He had been cured of fanaticism; but the higher element, the exalted vein of spiritual feeling, remained, and perceptibly communicated itself to Nelson, whose last work—a preface to Lee's edition of Thomas a Kempis—is far more in harmony with the general tone of mystical thought than any of his former writings. During the last few months of Nelson's life, they were much together. One of the very last incidents in his life was a drive with Lee in the park, when they watched the sun 'burst from behind a cloud, and accepted it for an emblem of the eternal brightness that should shortly break upon him.'[5]

Nelson was more or less intimate with several other Nonjurors;

[1] Secretan, 70. He was much fascinated by the writings of Madame Bourignon.—Hearne to Rawlinson, quoted in Wilson's *History of Merchant Taylors*, 957.

[2] *History of Montanism*, &c., 344. [3] Secretan, 273. [4] Id. 70.

[5] Secretan, 171. Wilson quotes from the Rawlinson MSS. a very beautiful prayer composed by Lee soon before his death, for 'all Christians, however divided or distinguished . . . throughout the whole militant Church upon earth.'—*History of Merchant Taylors*, 956.

such as were Francis Cherry, of Shottisbrooke, a generous and popular country gentleman, whose house was always a hospitable refuge for Nonjurors and Jacobites;[1] Brokesby, Mr. Cherry's chaplain, author of the 'Life of Dodwell,' and of a history of the Primitive Church, to whom Nelson owed much valuable help in his 'Festivals and Fasts;' Jeremy Collier, whom Macaulay ranks first among the Nonjurors in ability; Nathanael Spinckes,[2] afterwards raised to the shadowy honours and duties of the nonjuring episcopate, Nelson's trustee for the money bequeathed by him to assist the deprived clergy; and lastly, Charles Leslie, an ardent and accomplished controversialist, whom Dr. Johnson excepted from his dictum that no Nonjuror could reason.[3] It may be added here, that when Pepys, author of the well-known 'Diary,' cast about in 1703, the last year of his life, for a spiritual adviser among the nonjuring clergy, Robert Nelson was the one among his acquaintances to whom he naturally turned for information.

The decision of many a conscientious man hung wavering for a long time on the balance as he debated whether or not he could accept the new oath of allegiance. Friends, whose opinions on public matters and on Church questions were almost identical, might on this point very easily arrive at different determinations. But the resolve once made, those who took different courses often became widely separated. Many acquaintances, many friendships were broken off by the divergence. Some of the more rigid Nonjurors, headed by Sancroft himself, went so far as to refuse all Church communion with those among their late brethren who had incurred the sin of compliance; and it was plainly impossible to be on any terms of intimacy with one who could be welcomed back into the company of the faithful only as 'a true penitent for the sin of schism.'[4] There were some, on the other hand, who were fully aware of the difficulties that beset the question, and had not a word or thought of condemnation for those who did not share in the scruples they themselves felt. They could not take the oath, but neither did they make it any cause of severance, or discontinue their attendance at the public prayers. But for the most part even those Nonjurors who held no extreme views fell gradually into a set of their own, with its own ideas, hopes, pre-

[1] Hearne dwells enthusiastically on his high qualities, his religious conscientiousness, his learning, modesty, sweet temper, his charity in prosperity, his resignation in adverse fortune.—*Reliquiæ*, i. 287.

[2] Secretan, 50, 69, 284. He was a learned man, a student of many languages.—*Nichols*, i. 124.

[3] Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, iv. 256.

[4] A regular form of admission 'into the true and Catholic remnant of the Britannick Churches,' was drawn up for this purpose.—*Life of Kettlewell*, App. xvii.

judices, and sympathies. They could scarcely help making a great principle of right or wrong of that for which most of them had sacrificed so much. It was intolerable, after loss of home and property in the cause, as they believed, of truth and duty, to be called factious separatists, authors of needless schism. Hence, in very self-defence, they were driven to attach all possible weight to the reasons which had placed them, loyal Churchmen as they were, in a Nonconformist position, to rally round their own standard, and to strive to the utmost of their power to show that it was they, and not their opponents, not the Jurors but the Nonjurors, who were the truest and most faithful sons of the Anglican Church. Under such circumstances, the gap grew ever wider which had sprung up between themselves and those who had not scrupled at the oath. Even between such friends as Ken and Bull, Nelson and Tillotson, a temporary estrangement was occasioned. But Robert Nelson was not of a nature to allow minor differences, however much exaggerated in importance, to stand long in the way of friendship or works of Christian usefulness. He lived chiefly in a nonjuring circle ; but even during the years when he wholly absented himself from parochial worship, he was on friendly and even intimate terms with many leading members of the establishment, and their active co-operator in every scheme for extending its beneficial influences.

First in honour among his conforming friends stood Bishop Bull, his old tutor and warm friend, to whom he always acknowledged a deep debt of gratitude. Three years after his death Nelson published his life and works, shortening, it is said, his own days by the too assiduous labour which he bestowed upon the task. But it was a work of love which he was exceedingly anxious to accomplish. In the preface, after recording his high admiration of his late friend's merits, he solemnly ends with the words, 'beseeching God to enable me to finish what I begin in His name, and dedicate it to His honour and glory.'[1]

Both in his lifetime and afterwards, Bull has always been held in deserved repute as one of the most illustrious names in the roll of English bishops. Nelson called him 'a consummate divine,' and by no means stood alone in his opinion. Those who attach a high value to original and comprehensive thought will scarcely consider him entitled to such an epithet. He was a man of great piety, sound judgment, and extensive learning, but not of the grasp and power which signally influences a generation, and leaves a mark in the history of religious progress. He loved the Church of England with that earnestness of affection which in the

[1] Nelson's *Life of Bull*, 4.

seventeenth century specially characterised those who remembered its prostration, and had shared its depressed fortunes. Dr. Skinner, ejected Bishop of Oxford, had admitted him into orders at the early age of twenty-one. The Canon, he said, could not be strictly observed in such times of difficulty and distress. They were not days when the Church could afford to wait for the services of so zealous and able an advocate. He proved an effective champion against all its real and presumed adversaries—Puritans and Nonconformists, Roman Catholics, Latitudinarians and Socinians. An acute controversialist, skilled in the critical knowledge of Scripture, thoroughly versed in the annals of primitive antiquity, he was an opponent not lightly to be challenged. A devoted adherent of the English Church, scrupulously observant of all its rites and usages, and convinced as of 'a certain and evident truth that the Church of England is in her doctrine, discipline, and worship, most agreeable to the primitive and apostolical institution,'[1] his only idea of improvement and reform in Church matters was to remove distinct abuses, and to restore ancient discipline. Yet he was not so completely the High Churchman as to be unable to appreciate and enter to some extent into the minds of those who within his own Church had adopted opposite views. He used to speak, for example, with the greatest respect of Dr. Conant, a distinguished Churchman of Puritan views, who had been his rector at Exeter College, and whose instructions and advice had made, he said, very deep impression on him.[2] So, on the other hand, although a strenuous opponent of Rome, he did not fail to discriminate and do justice to what was Catholic and true in her system. And it tells favourably for his candour, that while he defended Trinitarian doctrine with unequalled force and learning, he should have had to defend himself against a charge of Arian tendencies,[3] simply because he did not withhold authorities which showed that the primitive fathers did not always express very defined views upon the subject. His most notable and unique distinction consisted in the thanks he received, through Bossuet, from the whole Gallican Church, for his defence of the Nicene faith; his most practical service to religion was the energetic protest of his 'Harmonia Apostolica' in favour of a healthy and fruitful faith in opposition to the Antinomian doctrines of arbitrary grace which, at the time when

[1] Speech before the House of Lords, 1705.—Nelson's *Life of Bull*, 355.

[2] Nelson's *Life of Bull*, 11. Archdeacon Conant stood very high in Tillotson's estimation, as a man 'whose learning, piety, and thorough knowledge of the true principles of Christianity would have adorned the highest station.'—Birch's *Life of Tillotson*, *Works*, i. ccxii.

[3] Nelson's *Life of Bull*, 243–9. Dorner, ii. 83.

he published his 'Apostolic Harmony,' had become most widely prevalent in England.

Bull had been ordained at twenty-one; he was consecrated, in 1705, Bishop of St. Davids, at the almost equally exceptional age of seventy. He succeeded a bad man who had been expelled from his see for glaring simony; and it was felt, not without justice, that the cause of religion and the honour of the Episcopate would gain more by the elevation of a man of the high repute in which Bull was universally held, than it would lose by the growing infirmities of his old age. He accepted the dignity with hesitation, in hopes that his son, the Archdeacon of Llandaff, who however died before him, would be able greatly to assist him in the discharge of his duties. But as he was determined that if he could not be as active as he would wish, he would at all events reside strictly in his diocese, he saw little or no more of his friend Nelson, of whom he had said that 'he scarce knew any one in the world for whom he had greater respect and love.'[1] During the first four years of the century there had been a frequent correspondence between them on the subject of his controversy with Bossuet, with whom Nelson had long been in the habit of interchanging friendly courtesies. The Bishop of Meaux had written, in 1700, to Nelson, expressing admiration of Bull's work on the Trinity, and wonder as to what he meant by the term 'Catholic,' and why it was that, having such respect for primitive antiquity, he remained nevertheless separated from the unity of Rome. Bull wrote in answer his 'Corruptions of the Church of Rome,' and sent the manuscript of it to Nelson in 1704. It did not, however, reach Bossuet, who died that year. Bishop Bull followed him in 1709.

Nelson was well acquainted, though scarcely intimate, with Bishop Beveridge, Bull's contemporary at St. Asaph. The two prelates were men of much the same stamp. Both were divines of great theological learning; but while Bull's great talents were chiefly conspicuous in his controversial and argumentative works, Beveridge was chiefly eminent as a student and devotional writer. His 'Private Thoughts on Religion and Christian Life,' and his papers on 'Public Prayer' and 'Frequent Communions,' have always maintained a high reputation. Like Bull, he was profoundly read in the history of the primitive Church, but possessed an accomplishment which his brother bishop had not, in his understanding of several oriental languages. Like him, he had been an active and experienced parish clergyman, and, like him, he was attached almost to excess to a strict and rigid observance

[1] Secretan, 255.

of the appointed order of the English Church. It was to him that Dean Tillotson addressed the often quoted words, 'Doctor, Doctor, Charity is above rubrics.'[1] Yet it must not be inferred therefore, that he was stiffly set against all change. In a sermon preached before Convocation at their very important meeting of 1689, he had remarked of ecclesiastical laws other than those which are fundamental and eternal, 'that they ought not indeed to be altered without grave reasons; but that such reasons were not at that moment wanting. To unite a scattered flock in one fold under one shepherd, to remove stumbling-blocks from the path of the weak, to reconcile hearts long estranged, to restore spiritual discipline to its primitive vigour, to place the best and purest of Christian societies on a base broad enough to stand against all the attacks of earth and hell—these were objects which might well justify some modification, not of Catholic institutions, but of national and provincial usages.'[2]

Beveridge was one of the bishops for whom the moderate Nonjurors had much regard. In most respects he was of their school of thought; and although, like Wilson of Sodor and Man, and Hooper of Bath and Wells, he had no scruple, for his own part, to take the oath of allegiance to William and Mary, he fully understood the reasonings of those who had. He greatly doubted the legality and right of appointing new bishops to sees not canonically vacant, so that when he was nominated in the place of Ken, he after some deliberation declined the office. He and Nelson saw a good deal of each other. They were both constant attendants at the weekly meetings of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, an association which Beveridge zealously promoted,[3] and to which he left the greater part of his property. The minutes of the society refer to private consultations between him and Nelson for arranging about a popular edition in Welsh of the Prayer-book, and to the bishop distributing largely in his diocese a translation of Nelson's tract on Confirmation. They also frequently met at the committees of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. In his 'Life of Bull' Nelson speaks in terms of much admiration for Beveridge, whom he calls 'a pattern of true primitive piety.' He praises his plain and affecting sermons; and says that 'he had a way of gaining people's hearts and touching their consciences which bore some resemblance to the apostolical age,' and that he could mention many 'who owed the change of their lives, under God, to

[1] Birch's *Life of Tillotson*, lxxxviii.

[2] 'Concio ad Synodum,' quoted by Macaulay, *History of England*, chap. xiv.

[3] Secretan, 135.

his instructions.'[1] Like Bull and Ken, the latter of whom was born in the same year with him, his life belongs chiefly to the history of the preceding century, for he died in 1707; his short episcopal career however lay, as was the case with Bull, only in the first decade of the eighteenth.

Sharp, Archbishop of York, must by no means be omitted from the list of Robert Nelson's friends, the more so as he was mainly instrumental in overcoming the scruples which for many years had deterred Nelson from the communion of the national Church. 'It was impossible,' writes the Archbishop's son, 'that such religious men, who were so intimate with each other, and spent many hours together in private conversation, should not frequently discuss the reasons that divided them in Church communion.'[2] Sharp's diary shows that early in 1710 they had many interviews on the subject. His arguments prevailed; and he records with satisfaction that on Easter Day that year his friend, for the first time since the Revolution, received the Communion at his hands. The Archbishop was well fitted to act this part of a conciliator. In the first place, Nelson held him in high esteem as a man of learning, piety, and discernment, 'who fills one of the archiepiscopal thrones with that universal applause which is due to his distinguishing merit.'[3] This general satisfaction which had attended his promotion qualified him the more for a peacemaker in the Church. At a time when party spirit was more than usually vehement, it was his rare lot to possess in a high degree the respect and confidence of men of all opinions. From his earliest youth he had learnt to appreciate high Christian worth under varied forms. His father had been a fervent Puritan, his mother a strenuous Royalist; and he speaks with equal gratitude of the deep impressions left upon his mind by the grave piety of the one, and of the admiration instilled into him by the other of the proscribed Liturgy of the English Church. He went up to Cambridge a Calvinist; he learnt a larger, a happier, and no less spiritual theology under the teaching of More and Cudworth. His studies then took a wide range. He delighted in imaginative literature, especially in Greek poetry, became very fairly versed in Hebrew and the interpretation of the Old Testament, took much pleasure in botany and chemistry, and was at once fascinated with the Newtonian philosophy. He was also an accomplished antiquary. At a later period, as rector of St. Giles in the Fields, and Friday lecturer at St. Lawrence Jewry, he gained much fame as one of the most persuasive and affecting preachers of his age. Tillotson and Clagett were

[1] *Life of Bull*, 64. [2] Sharp's *Life*, by his Son, ii. 32. Secretan, 78–9.
[3] *Life of Bull*, 238.

his most intimate friends; and among his acquaintances were Stillingfleet, Patrick, Beveridge, Cradock, Whichcot, Calamy, Scot, Sherlock, Wake, and Cave, including all that eminent circle of London clergy who were at that time the distinguishing ornament of the English Church, and who constantly met at one another's houses to confer on the religious and ecclesiastical questions of the day. There was perhaps no one eminent divine, at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century, who had so much in sympathy with men of either section of the English Church. He was claimed by the Tories and High Churchmen; and no doubt, on the majority of subjects his views agreed with theirs, particularly in the latter part of his life. But his opinions were very frequently modified by a more liberal training and by more generous and considerate ideas than were common among them. He voted with them against occasional Conformity, protested against any enfeebling of the Test Acts, and took, it must be acknowledged, a far from tolerant line generally in the debates of 1704-9 relating to the liberties of Dissenters. On the other hand, he indignantly resented the unworthy attempt of the more extreme Tories to force the occasional Conformity Act through the House of Lords by 'tacking' it to a money bill. He expressed the utmost displeasure against anything like bitterness and invective; he had been warmly in favour of a moderate comprehension of Dissenters, had voted that Tillotson should be prolocutor when the scheme was submitted to Convocation, and had himself taken part of the responsibility of revision. As in 1675 he had somewhat unadvisedly accepted, in the discussion with Nonconformists, the co-operation of Dodwell, so, in 1707, he bestowed much praise on Hickes' answer to Tindal (sent to him by Nelson) on behalf of the rights of the Christian priesthood. But Dodwell's Book of Schism maintained much more exclusive sentiments than Sharp's sermon on Conscience, of which it was professedly a defence; nor could the Archbishop by any means coincide in the more immoderate opinions of the hot-tempered nonjuring Dean. And so far from agreeing with Hickes and Dodwell, who would acknowledge none other than Episcopal Churches, he said that if he were abroad he should communicate with the foreign Reformed Churches wherever he happened to be.[1] On many points of doctrine he was a High Churchman; he entirely agreed, for example, with Nelson and the Nonjurors in general, in regretting the omission in King Edward's second Prayer-book of the prayer of oblation.[2] He bestowed much pains in maintaining the dignity and efficiency of

[1] *Life*, by his Son, ii. 28.

[2] Secretan, 178.

his cathedral ;[1] but, with a curious intermixture of Puritan feeling, told one of his Nonconformist correspondents that he did not much approve of musical services, and would be glad if the law would permit an alteration.[2] In regard of the questions specially at issue with the Nonjurors, he heartily assented for his own part to the principles of the Revolution, maintaining 'for a certain truth that as the law makes the king, so the same law extends or limits or transfers our obedience and allegiance.'[3] This being the case, it may at first appear unintelligible that an ardent nonjuring champion of passive obedience and non-resistance should assert that 'by none are these truly Catholic doctrines more openly avowed than by the present excellent metropolitan of York.'[4] But Dodwell was correct. Archbishop Sharp, with perfect consistency, combined with Whig politics the favourite High Church tenet of the Jacobean era. He strenuously maintained the duty of passive obedience, not however to the sovereign monarch, but to the sovereign law.[5] At the same time he felt much sympathy with the Nonjurors, and was sometimes accused of Jacobitism because he would not drop his acquaintance with them, nor disguise his pity for the sacrifices in which their principles involved them. When a choice was given him of two or three of the sees vacated by the deprivation of the nonjuring bishops, he declined the offer. He would not allow that there had been any real unlawfulness or irregularity in their dispossession, but as a matter of personal feeling he disliked the idea of accepting promotion under such circumstances. Although therefore, in many ways, he differed much in opinion from the Nonjurors, he possessed in a great degree their attachment and respect. Robert Nelson was neither the only one of them with whom he was on terms of cordial friendship, nor was he by any means the only one whom he persuaded to return to the Established Communion.

Bishop Smalridge of Bristol should be referred to, however briefly, in connection with the truly worthy man who is the main subject of this paper. He was constantly associated with Nelson in his various works of charity, especially in forwarding missionary undertakings, in assisting Dr. Bray's projects of parochial lending libraries, and as a royal commissioner with him for the increase of church accommodation. Nelson bequeathed to him his Madonna by Correggio 'as a small testimony of that great value

[1] 'None,' said Willis in his *Survey of Cathedrals*, 'were so well served as that of York, under Sharp.'—*Life of Sharp*, i. 120.

[2] *Thoresby's Correspondence*, i. 274.

[3] *Life*, i. 264.

[4] Dodwell's 'Case in View,' quoted in Lathbury's *History of the Nonjurors*, 197.

[5] *Life*, i. 264.

and respect I bear to his lordship;'[1] and to his accomplished pen is owing the very beautiful Latin epitaph placed to his friend's memory in St. George the Martyr's, Queen Square.[2] Under the name of 'Favonius,' he is spoken of in the 'Tatler' in the warmest language of admiring respect, as a very humane and good man, of well-tempered zeal and touching eloquence, and 'abounding with that sort of virtue and knowledge which makes religion beautiful.'[3] Bishop Newton has also spoken very highly of him, and adds that he was a man of much gravity and dignity and of great complacency and sweetness of manner. In reference to this last feature of his character, it was said of him, when he succeeded Atterbury as Dean of Carlisle, that he carried the bucket to extinguish the fires which the other had kindled. His political sympathies, however, accorded with those of Atterbury, and brought him into close relation with the Nonjurors. Although he had submitted to the new Constitution, he was a thorough Jacobite in feeling. His Thirtieth of January sermons were sometimes marked with an extravagance of expression[4] foreign to his usual manner; and he and Atterbury, with whom he had recently edited Lord Clarendon's History, were the only bishops who refused to sign the declaration of abhorrence of the Rebellion of 1715.[5]

Smalridge and Nelson had a mutual friend,[6] whom they both highly valued, in Dr. Ernest Grabe, a Prussian of remarkable character and great erudition, who had settled in England under the especial favour of King William. Dissatisfied as to the validity of Lutheran orders, he had at first turned his thoughts to Rome, not unaware that he should find in that Church many departures from the simplicity of the early faith, but feeling that it possessed at all events that primitive constitution which he had learnt to consider essential. He was just about to take this step, when he met with Spener, the eminent leader of the German Pietists, to whom he communicated his difficulties, and who pointed out to him the Church of England as a communion likely to meet his wants. He came to this country[7] at the end of the seventeenth century, received a royal pension, took priest's orders, and continued with indefatigable labour his patristic studies. It became the great project of his life to maintain

[1] Secretan, 285.

[2] Nichols' *Lit. An.* i. 190. [3] Nos. 72 and 114.

[4] 'Animadversions on the two last January 30 sermons,' 1702. The same might be said of his 'Sermon before the Court of Aldermen,' January 30, 1704.

[5] Lord Mahon's *History of England*, chap. 12. [6] Secretan, 223.

[7] The parallel with an interesting portion of I. Casaubon's life is singularly close. See Pattison's *Isaac Casaubon*, chap. 5.

a close communication between the English and Lutheran Churches,[1] to bring about in Prussia a restoration of episcopacy, and to introduce there a liturgy composed upon the English model. It cannot be said that the general course of theological thought in England was at this time very congenial to his aspirations; but his great learning and the earnest sincerity of his ideas were widely appreciated, and within a somewhat confined circle of High Churchmen and Nonjurors he was cordially welcomed, and his services highly valued. He pushed his conformity to what he considered the usages of the Primitive Church to the verge of eccentricity. Yet 'indeed,' says Kennet, without any sympathy in his practices, but with a kindly smile, 'his piety and our charity may cover all this.'[2]

Dr. Thomas Bray may stand as a fit representative of another class of Nelson's friends and associates. So far from agreeing with Nelson in his Nonjuring sentiments, the prospect of the constitutional change had kindled in him enthusiastic expectations. 'Good Dr. Bray,' remarks Whiston, 'had said how happy and religious the nation would become when the House of Hanover came, and was very indignant when Mr. Mason said that matters would not be mended.'[3] He accepted a living which had been vacated by a Nonjuring clergyman, but spent alike his clerical and private means in the benevolent and Christian hearted schemes to which the greater part of his life was dedicated.[4] It is not the purpose of this chapter to discuss the missionary and other philanthropical activities which at the close of the seventeenth and the opening of the eighteenth centuries resulted in the formation of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and other kindred associations. It may be sufficient here to repeat the warm-hearted encomium of his fellow labourer in this noble work :—'I am sure he has been one of the greatest instruments for propagating Christian knowledge this age has produced. The libraries abroad, our society (the S.P.C.K.), and the Corporation (the S.P.G.), are owing to his unwearied solicitations.'[5] In organising the American Church, in plans for civilising and christianising the Indians, in establishing libraries for the use of missionaries and the poorer clergy in the colonies, on shipboard, in seaport towns, and in the secluded

[1] In conjunction with Archbishop Sharp, Smalridge, and Jablonski, &c. See Chapter on 'Comprehension, &c.'

[2] Secretan, 221, note. Nelson gives a full account of Dr. Grabe in his *Life of Bull*, 343–6.

[3] Memoirs, 154.

[4] *Life of Ken*, by a Layman, 619–20.

[5] Secretan, 142.

parishes of England and Wales, in translations of the Liturgy and other devotional books, in the reformation of prisons, in measures taken for the better suppression of crime and profligacy, —Bray and Nelson, with General Oglethorpe and other active coadjutors, helped one another with all their heart. They met in the board-room of the two great societies, in one another's houses, and sometimes they may have talked over their projects with Bishop Ken at the seat of their generous supporter, Lord Weymouth.[1]

The names of many other men, more or less eminent in their day for piety or learning, might be added to the list of those who possessed and valued Robert Nelson's friendship ; among them may be mentioned —Dr. John Mapletoft, with whom he maintained a close correspondence for no less than forty years : a man who had travelled much and learnt many languages, a celebrated physician, and afterwards, when he took orders, an accomplished London preacher ; Francis Gastrell, Bishop of Chester, Mapletoft's son-in-law ; [2] Sir Richard Blackmore, another physician of note, and, like Mapletoft, most zealous in all plans for doing good, but whose unlucky taste for writing dull verses brought down upon him the unmerciful castigation of the wits ; John Johnson of Cranbrook, with whose writings on the Eucharistic Sacrifice Nelson most warmly sympathised ; Edmund Halley, the mathematician, his school playmate and life-long friend ; Ralph Thoresby, an antiquarian of high repute, a moderate Dissenter in earlier life, a thoughtful and earnest Churchman in later years, but who throughout life maintained warm and intimate relations with many leading members of either communion ; Dr. Charlett, Master of University College, Oxford ; Dr. Cave, the well-known writer of early Church History, to whose literary help he was frequently indebted ; John Evelyn ; Samuel, father of John and Charles Wesley, whose verses, written on the fly-leaf of his copy of the ' Festivals and Fasts,' commemorative of his attachment to Nelson and of his reverence for his virtues, used to be prefixed to some editions of his friend's works ; nor should the list be closed without the addition of the name of the eminent Gallican bishop Bossuet, with whom he had become acquainted in France, and had kept up the interesting correspondence already noticed in connection with Bishop Bull.

The group composed of Nelson and his friends, of whom he

[1] Oglethorpe and Nelson sometimes met here. Secretan, 211.

[2] He was one of the many writers against the Deists. It was to his credit, that although he had been strongly opposed to Atterbury in controversy, he earnestly supported him in what he thought an oppressive prosecution.—Williams' *Memoirs of Atterbury*, i. 417.

had many, and never lost one, would be pleasant to contemplate, if for no other reason, yet as the picture of a set of earnest men, united in common attachment to one central figure, varying much on some points of opinion, but each endeavouring to live worthily of the Christian faith. From one point of view the features of dissimilarity among his friends are more interesting than those of resemblance. A Churchman, with whom Jurors and Nonjurors met on terms of equal cordiality, who was intimate alike with Tillotson and Hickes —whose love for Ken was nowise incompatible with much esteem for Kidder, the 'uncanonical usurper' of his see —and who consulted for the advancement of Christian knowledge as readily with Burnet, Patrick, and Fowler, as with Bull, Beveridge, and Sharp—represents a sort of character which every national Church ought to produce in abundance, but which stands out in grateful relief from the contentions which embittered the first years of the century and the spiritual dulness which set in soon afterwards.

Yet, though Robert Nelson had too warm a heart to sacrifice the friendship of a good man to any difference of opinion, and too hearty a zeal in good works to let his personal predilections stand in the way of them, he belonged very distinctively to the High Church party. Some of his best and most prominent characteristics did not connect him with one more than with another section of the Church. The philanthropical activity, which did so much to preserve him from narrowness and intolerance, was, as Tillotson has observed, one of the most redeeming features of the period in which he lived;[1] the genial serenity of his religion is like the spirit that breathed in Addison. But all his deeper sympathies were with the High Churchmen and Nonjurors—men who had been brought up in that spirit of profound attachment to Anglo-Catholic theology and feeling which was prominent among Church of England divines in the age that preceded the Commonwealth.

The Church party of which, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, Nelson and his friends were worthy representatives, was rapidly losing strength. Soon after his death it had almost ceased to exist as a visible and united power. The general tone of feeling in Church matters became so unfavourable to its continued vigour, that it gradually dwindled away. Not that there was no longer a High Church, and even a strong High Church party. There has been no period in the history of the Reformed English Church in which the three leading varieties of opinion, so familiar to us at the present day, may not be distinctly traced.

[1] S. xx *Works*, ii. 252.

The eighteenth century is certainly no exception ; from its first to its last year so-called High Churchmen were abundant everywhere, especially among the clergy. But they would scarcely have been recognised as such by Nelson, or by those with whom he chiefly sympathised. The type became altered, and not for the better. A change had already set in before the seventeenth century closed ; and when in quick succession Bull and Beveridge, Ken and Nelson, passed away, there were no new men who could exactly supply their places. The High Churchmen who belonged more distinctly to Queen Anne's reign, and those of the succeeding Georgian era, lacked some of the higher qualities of the preceding generations. They numbered many worthy, excellent men, but there was no longer the same depth of feeling, the same fervour, the same spirit of willing self-denial, the same constant reference to a supposed higher standard of primitive usage. Their High Churchmanship took rather the form of an ecclesiastical toryism, persuaded more than ever of the unique excellence of the English Church, its divinely constituted government, and its high, if not exclusive title to purity and orthodoxy of doctrine. The whole party shared, in fact, to a very great extent in the spiritual dulness which fell like a blight upon the religious life of the country at large. A secondary, but still an important difference, consisted in the change effected by the Revolution in the relation between the Church and the Crown. The harsh revulsion of sentiment, however beneficial in its ultimate consequences, could not fail to detract for the time from that peculiar tone of semi-religious loyalty which in previous generations had been at once the weakness and the glory of the English Church.

The nonjuring separation was a serious and long-lasting loss to the Church of England ; a loss corresponding in kind, if not in degree, to what it might have endured, if by a different turn of political and ecclesiastical circumstances, the most zealous members of the section headed by Tillotson and Burnet had been ejected from its fold. It is the distinguishing merit of the English Church that, to a greater extent probably than any other religious body, it is at once Catholic and Protestant, and that without any formal assumption of reconciling the respective claims of authority and private judgment, it admits a wide field for the latter, without ceasing to attach veneration and deference to primitive antiquity and to long established order. It is most true that 'the Church herself is greater, wider, older than any of the parties within her ;'[1] but it is no less certain that when a

[1] Bishop Magee, Charge at Northampton, October 1872.

leading party becomes enfeebled in character and influence, as it was by the defection to the Nonjurors of so many learned and self-sacrificing High Churchmen, the diminution of vital energy in the whole body is likely to be far more than proportionate to the number of the seceders, or even to their individual weight.

Judged by modern feeling, there might seem no very apparent reason why the Nonjurors should have belonged nearly, if not quite exclusively, to the same general school of theological thought. In our own days, the nature of a man's Churchmanship is no key whatever to his opinions upon matters which trench on politics. High sacramental theories, or profound reverence for Church tradition and ancient usage, or decided views as to the exclusive rights of an episcopally ordained ministry, are almost as likely to be combined with liberal, or even with democratic politics, as with the most staunch conservative opinions. No one imagines that any possible change of constitutional government would greatly affect the general bias, whatever it might be, of ecclesiastical thought. But the Nonjurors were all High Churchmen, and that in a much better sense of that word than when, in Queen Anne's time, Tory and High Church were in popular language convertible terms. And though they were not by any means the sole representatives of the older High Church spirit—for some who were deeply imbued with it took the oath of allegiance with perfect conscientiousness, and without the least demur—yet in them it was chiefly embodied. Professor Blunt remarks with much truth, that to a great extent they carried away with them that regard for primitive times, which with them was destined by degrees almost to expire.[1] If the Nonjurors were nearly allied with the Jacobites on the one side, they were also the main supporters of religious opinions which were in no way related with one dynasty of sovereigns rather than with another, but which have always formed a very important element of English Church history, and could not pass for the time into comparative oblivion without a corresponding loss.

The doctrines of non-resistance and passive obedience, in defence of which so much was once written, and so many sacrifices endured, are no longer heard of. It is difficult now to realise with what passionate fervour of conviction these obsolete theories were once maintained by many Englishmen as a vital portion, not only of their political, but of their religious creed. Lord Chancellor Somers, whose able treatise upon the Rights of Kings brought to bear against the Nonjurors a vast array of

[1] J. J. Blunt, *Early Fathers*, 19; also Archbishop Manning's *Essays*, Series 2, 4.

arguments from Reason, Scripture, History, and Law, remarked in it that there were some divines of the Church of England who instilled notions of absolute power, passive obedience, and non-resistance, as essential points of religion, doctrines necessary to salvation.[1] Put in this extreme form, the belief might have been repudiated; but undoubtedly passages may be quoted in great abundance from nonjuring and other writers which, literally understood, bear no other construction. At all events, sentiments scarcely less uncompromising were continually held, not by mere sycophants and courtiers, but by many whose opinions were adorned by noble Christian lives, willing self-sacrifice, and undaunted resolution. Good Bishop Lake of Chichester said on his death-bed that 'he looked upon the great doctrine of passive obedience as the distinguishing character of the Church of England,'[2] and that it was a doctrine for which he hoped he could lay down his life. Bishop Thomas of Worcester, who died the same year, expressed the same belief and the same hope. Robert Nelson spoke of it as the good and wholesome doctrine of the Church of England, 'wherein she has gloried as her special characteristic. . . . Papists and Presbyterians have both been tardy on these points, and I wish the practice of some in the Church of England had been more blameless,'[3] but he was sure that it had been the doctrine of the primitive Christians, and that it was very plainly avowed both by the Church and State of England. Sancroft vehemently reproved 'the apostacy of the National Church'[4] in departing from this point of faith. Even Tillotson and Burnet[5] were at one time no less decided about it. The former urged it upon Lord Russell as 'the declared doctrine of all Protestant Churches,' and that the contrary was 'a very great and dangerous mistake,' and that if not a sin of ignorance, 'it will appear of a much more heinous nature, as in truth it is, and calls for a very particular and deep repentance.'[6] Just about the time when the new oath of allegiance was imposed, the doctrine of non-resistance received the very aid it most needed, in the invention of a new term admirably adapted to inspire a warmer feeling of religious enthusiasm in those who were preparing to suffer in its cause. The expression appears to have originated

[1] Lord Somers' 'Judgment of whole Kingdoms. . . . As to Rights of Kings,' 1710, § 117.

[2] *Life of Kettlewell*, App. No. 13. Kettlewell uses the same words, Id. p. 87.

[3] Letter to his Nephew, Nichols' *Lit. An.* iv. 219.

[4] Lathbury, 94.

[5] A letter from Burnet to Compton, quoted from the Rawl. MSS. in *Life of Ken*, 527.

[6] Birch's *Tillotson*, lxxv.

with Kettlewell, who had strongly felt the force of an objection which had been raised to Bishop Lake's declaration. It had been said that to call this or that doctrine the distinguishing characteristic of a particular Church was so far forth to separate it from the Church Catholic. Kettlewell saw at once that this argument wounded High Churchmen in the very point where they were most sensitive, and for the future preferred to speak of non-resistance as characteristically 'a Doctrine of the Cross.'[1] The epithet was quickly adopted, and no doubt was frequently a source of consolation to Nonjurors. At other times it might have conveyed a painful sense of disproportion in its application to what, from another point of view, was a mere political revolution. But with them passive obedience and divine right had been raised to the level of a great religious principle for which they were well content to be confessors. It must have added much to the moral strength of the nonjuring separation. Argument or ridicule would not make much impression upon men who had always this to fall back upon, that 'non-resistance is after all too much a doctrine of the Cross, not to meet with great opposition from the prejudices and passions of men. Flesh and blood and corrupt reason will set up the great law of self-preservation against it, and find a thousand absurdities and contradictions in it.'[2] How thoroughly Kettlewell's term was adopted, and how deeply the feeling which it represented was cherished by the saintliest of the High Churchmen of that age, is nowhere more remarkably instanced than in some very famous words of Bishop Ken. In that often quoted passage of his will where he professed the faith in which he died, the closing words refer to the Church of England 'as it stands distinguished from all Papal and Puritan innovations, and as it adheres to the doctrine of the Cross.' The special interpretation to be placed upon the final clause somewhat jars upon the ear, although not without interest in illustrating the strong religious principle which forbade the transfer of his political allegiance. Dr. Lee, who had excellent opportunities of knowing, says, 'there cannot remain any manner of doubt'[3] that Ken used the expression with particular reference to the sense in which his friend Kettlewell had used it.

When once the Hanoverian succession was established, the doctrine of a divine right of kings, with the theories consequent upon it, passed gradually away; and many writers, forgetting that it was once a generally received dogma in Parliament as in

[1] *Life of Kettlewell*, 87.

[2] Whaley N., Sermon before the University of Oxford, January 30, 1710, 16.

[3] Lee's *Life of Kettlewell*, 167.

Convocation, in the laws as much as in the homilies, have sought to attach to the Church of England the odium of servility and obsequiousness for its old adherence to it. But as the tenet died not without honour, dignified in many instances by high Christian feeling, and noble sacrifice of worldly interest, so also it had gained much of its early strength in one of the most important principles of the Reformation. When England rejected the Papacy, the Church, as in the old English days before the Conquest, gathered round its sovereign as the emblem and as the centre of its national independence. Only the tie was a personal one; much in the same way as the Pope had been far more than an embodied symbol of Church authority. The sovereign represented the people, but no one then spoke of 'sovereignty residing in the whole body of the people,'[1] or dreamt of asserting that the supremacy of the King was a fiction, meaning only the supremacy of the three estates.[2] So it long continued, especially in the Church. Ecclesiastical is ever wont to lag somewhat in the rear of political improvement. In the State, the personal supremacy of the sovereign, though a very strong reality in the hands of the Tudors, had been tutored into a moderately close conformity with the wishes of the popular representatives. In the Church, the same process was going on, but it was a far more gradual one; and the spirit of loyal deference which long remained unaltered in the one, gained increasing strength in the other. Upon the reaction which succeeded after the Commonwealth, the Church, as it had been ever faithful to the royal fortunes in their time of reverse, shared to the full in the effusion with which the nation in general greeted the return of monarchy, and was more than ever dazzled by the 'divinity which hedges round a King.' But under James II., the Church had cause to feel the perils of arbitrary power as keenly, or even more keenly than the nation in its civil capacity. By a remarkable leading of events, the foremost of the High Church bishops found themselves, amid the acclamations of the multitude, in the very van of a resistance which was indeed in a sense passive, but which plainly paved the way to active resistance on the part of others, and which, as they must themselves have felt, strained to the utmost that doctrine of passive obedience which was still dear to them as ever. Some even of the most earnest champions of the divine right of kings

[1] Warburton's 'Alliance,' iv. 173.

[2] 'The supremacy of the Queen is, in the sense used by the noble lord, no better than a fiction. There might have been such a supremacy down to the times of James II., but now there is no supremacy but that of the three estates of the realm and the supremacy of the law.'—J. Bright's *Speeches*, ii. 475.

were at last compelled to imagine circumstances under which the tenet would cease to be tenable. What if James should propose to hand over Ireland to France as the price of help against his own people? Ken, it is said, acknowledged that under such a contingency he should feel wholly released from his allegiance.

The revolution of 1688 dissipated the halo which had shed a fictitious light round the throne Queen Anne may have flattered herself that it was already reviving. George I. in his first speech to parliament laid claim to the ancient prestige of it. The old theories lingered long in manor-houses and parsonages, and among all whose hearts were with the banished Stuarts. But they could not permanently survive under such altered auspices; and a sentiment which had once been of real service both to Church and State, but which had become injurious to both, was disrooted from the constitution and disentangled from the religion of the country. The ultimate gain was great; yet it must be acknowledged that at the time a great price was paid for it. In the State, there was a notable loss of the old loyalty, a blunting in public matters of some of the finer feelings, an increase among State officers of selfish and interested motives, a spirit of murmuring and disaffection, a lowering of tone, an impaired national unity. In the Church, as the revulsion was greater, and in some respects the benefit greater, so also the temporary loss was both greater and more permanent. The beginning of the eighteenth century saw almost the last of the old-fashioned Anglicans, who dated from the time of Henry VIII.—men whose ardent love of what they considered primitive and Catholic usage had no tinge of Popery, and whose devoted attachment to the throne was wholly free from all unmanly servility. The High Church party was deprived of some of the best of its leaders, and was altogether divided, disorganised, and above all, lowered in tone; and the whole Church suffered in the deterioration of one of its principal sections.

In relation both to Nonjurors and to persons who, as a duty or a necessity, had accepted the new constitution, but were more or less Jacobite in their sympathies, a question arose of far more than temporary interest. It is one which frequently recurs, and is of much practical importance, namely, how far unity of worship implies, or ought to imply, a close unity of belief; and secondly, how far a clergyman is justified in continuing his ministrations if, agreeing in all essentials, he strongly dissents to some particular petitions or expressions in the services of which he is constituted the mouthpiece. The point immediately at issue was whether those who dissented from the State prayers could join with propriety in the public services. This was very variously

decided. There were some who denied that this was possible to persons who had any strict regard to consistency and truth.[1] How, said they, could they assist by their presence at public prayers which were utterly contradictory to their private ones? Many Nonjurors therefore, and many who had taken the oath on the understanding that it only bound them to submission, absented themselves entirely from public worship, or attended none other than nonjuring services. There was a considerable party, headed unfortunately by Sancroft himself, whose regret at the separation thus caused was greatly tempered by a kind of exultation at being, as they maintained, the 'orthodox and Catholic remnant' from which the main body of the English Church had apostatised.[2] Far different were the feelings of those whose opinions on the subject were less strangely exaggerated. If they joined the nonjuring communion, and forsook the familiar parish church, they did so sadly and reluctantly, and looked forward in hope to some change of circumstances which might remove their scruples and end the schism. It was thoroughly distasteful to men like Ken, Nelson, and Dodwell, to break away from a communion to which they were deeply attached, and which they were quite persuaded was the purest and best in Christendom. When the new Government was fairly established, when the heat of feeling was somewhat cooled by time, when the High Church sympathies of Anne had begun to reconcile them to the new succession, and when the last of the ejected bishops had withdrawn all claim on their obedience, many moderate Nonjurors were once more seen in church. They agreed that the offence of the State prayers should be no longer an insuperable bar.[3] They could at all events sufficiently signify their objection to the obnoxious words by declining to say Amen, or by rising from their knees, or by various other more or less demonstrative signs of disapprobation. Some indeed of the Nonjurors, among whom Bishop Frampton was prominent, and a great number of Jacobites, had never from the first lent any countenance to the schism, and attended the Church services as heretofore. The oath of allegiance being required before a clergyman could take office, it is of course impossible to tell whether any nonjuring clergyman would have consented to read, as well as to listen to, the State prayers. But there was undoubtedly a large body of Jacobite clergymen who in various ways reconciled this to their conscience. Their argument, founded on the sort of provisional loyalty due to a *de facto* sovereignty, was a tolerably

[1] Lathbury, 129. *Life of Kettlewell*, 139. [2] Lathbury, 94.

[3] Dodwell's *Further Prospect of the Case in View*, 1707, 19, 111, quoted in Lathbury, 201, 203.

valid one in its kind; a far more important one, in the extent and gravity of its bearings, was that which met the difficulty in the face. It was that which rests on the answer to the question whether a clergyman is guilty of insincerity, either in reality or in semblance, in continuing to read a service to part of which he strongly objects, though he is completely in accord with the general tone and spirit of the whole. The answer must evidently be a qualified one. Nothing could be worse for the interests of religion, than that its ministers should be suspected of saying what they do not mean; on the other hand, unless a Church concedes to its clergy a sufficiently ample latitude in their mode of interpreting its formularies, it will greatly suffer by losing the services of men of independent thought or strongly marked religious convictions. Among clergymen who submitted to the reigning powers, though their hopes and sympathies were centred at St. Germains, the alternative of either reading the State prayers or relinquishing office in the English Church must have been singularly embarrassing. To offer up a prayer in which the heart wholly belies the lip is infinitely more repugnant to religious and moral feeling than to put a legitimate, though it may not be the most usual, interpretation on words which contain a disputed point of doctrine or discipline. Yet, from another point of view, it was quite certain that as little weight as possible ought to be attached to a quasi-political difference of opinion which in itself was no sort of interruption to that confidence and sympathy in religious matters which should subsist between pastor and people. It was a great strait for a conscientious man to be placed in, and a difficulty which might fairly be left to the individual conscience to solve.

As for those Nonjurors and Jacobites who joined as laymen in the public services, undeterred by prayers which they objected to, it is just that question of dissent within, instead of without the Church, which has gained increased attention in our own days. When Robert Nelson was in doubt upon the subject, and asked Tillotson for his advice, the Archbishop made reply, 'As to the case you put, I wonder men should be divided in opinion about it. I think it plain, that no man can join in prayers in which there is any petition which he is verily persuaded is sinful. I cannot endure a trick anywhere, much less in religion.'[1] This honest and outspoken answer was however extremely superficial, and, coming from a man of so much eminence, must have had an unfortunate effect in extending the nonjuring schism. Although his opinion was perfectly sound under the precise

[1] Birch's *Life of Tillotson*, clxxxiii.

terms in which it is stated, the whole force of it rests on the word 'sinful.' If any word is used which falls the least short of this, Tillotson's remark becomes altogether questionable. Of course no one can be justified in countenancing what 'he is verily persuaded is sinful.' From this point of view, there were some Nonjurors to whom separation from the National Church was a moral necessity. Those among them, for instance, who drew up, or cordially approved, the 'Form for admitting penitents,' in which the sorrow-stricken wanderer in ways of conformity returns humblest thanks for his return from wrong to right, from error to truth, from schism to unity, from rebellion to loyalty—in a word, 'from the broad into the narrow way which leadeth to eternal life,'[1] — how could they be justified in anything short of separation? They could no more continue to attend their parish church, than one who had been a Roman Catholic could attend the mass if he had become persuaded it was rank idolatry, or a former Protestant his old place of worship when convinced that it was a den of mortal heresy. But between Nonjurors of the stern uncompromising type, and those semi-Jacobites who gave the allegiance of reason to one master, and that of sentiment to another, there were all grades of opinion; and to all except the most extreme among them the propriety of attending the public prayers was completely an open question. Tillotson ought to have known his old friend Nelson better, than to conceive it possible that a man of such deep religious feeling, and such sensitive honour, could be doubtful what to do, unless it might fairly be considered doubtful. His foolish commonplace appears indeed to have been sufficient to turn the scale. Nelson, almost immediately after receiving this opinion, decided on abandoning the national communion, though he took a different and a wiser view at a later period.

The circumstances of the time threw into exaggerated prominence the particular views entertained by Nelson's Juror and Nonjuror friends on the disputed questions connected with transferred allegiance. But, great as were the sacrifices which many of them incurred on account of these opinions,—great as was the tenacity with which they clung to them, and the vehemence with which they asserted them against all impugners—great, above all, as was the religious and spiritual importance with which their zeal for the cause invested these semi-political doctrines, yet it is not on such grounds that their interest as a Church party chiefly rests. No weight of circumstances could confer a more than secondary value on tenets which have no permanent bearing on

[1] *Life of Kettlewell*, App. 17.

the Christian life, and engage attention only under external and temporary conditions. The early Nonjurors, and their doctrinal sympathisers within the National Church, were a body of men from whom many in modern times have taken pleasure in deriving their ecclesiastical pedigree, not as upholders of nearly obsolete opinions about divine right and passive obedience, but as the main link between the High Churchmen of a previous age and their successors at a much later period. To the revivers in this century of the Anglo-Catholic theology, it seemed as though the direct succession of sound English divines ended with Bull and Beveridge, was partially continued, as by a side line, in some of the Nonjurors, and then dwindled and almost died out, until after the lapse of a hundred years its vitality was again renewed.

On points of doctrine and discipline the early Nonjurors differed in nothing from the High Churchmen whose communion they had deserted. Some of them called themselves, it is true, 'the old Church of England,' 'the Catholic and faithful remnant' which alone adhered to 'the orthodox and rightful bishops,' and bitter charges, mounting up to that of apostacy, were directed against the 'compliant' majority. But, wide as was the gulf, and heinous as was the sin by which, according to such Nonjurors, the Established Church had separated itself from primitive faith, the asserted defection consisted solely in this, that it had committed the sin of rebellion in forsaking its divinely appointed King, and the sin of schism in rejecting the authority of its canonical bishops. No one contended that there were further points of difference between the two communions. Dr. Bowes asked Blackburn, one of their bishops, whether 'he was so happy as to belong to his diocese?' 'Dear friend,' was the answer, 'we leave the sees open that the gentlemen who now unjustly possess them, upon the restoration, may, if they please, return to their duty and be continued. We content ourselves with full episcopal power as suffragans.' The introduction, however, in 1718, of the distinctive 'usages' in the communion service contributed greatly to the farther estrangement of a large section of the Nonjurors; and those who adopted the new Prayer-book drawn up in 1734 by Bishop Deacon, were alienated still more. The only communion with which they claimed near relationship was one which in their opinion had long ceased to exist. 'I am not of your communion,' said Bishop Welton on his death-bed, in 1726, to the English Chaplain at Lisbon, whose services he declined. 'I belong to the Church of England as it was reformed by Archbishop Cranmer.'[1] Thus too, when Bishop Deacon's son, a youth

[1] Hearne's *Reliquiæ*, ii. 257.

of little more than twenty, suffered execution for his share in the Jacobite rising of 1745, his last words upon the scaffold were that he died 'a member not of the Church of Rome, nor yet of that of England, but of a pure Episcopal Church, which has reformed all the errors, corruptions, and defects that have been introduced into the modern Churches of Christendom.[1] Yet the divergence of these Nonjurors from the National Church was, after all, far more apparent than real. It was only a very small minority, beginning with Deacon and Campbell, who outstepped in any of their ideas the tone of feeling which had long been familiar to many of the High Church party. Ever since the reign of Edward VI. the Church of England had included among its clerical and lay members some who had not ceased to regret the changes which had been made in the second Liturgy issued in his reign, and who hoped for a restoration of the rubrics and passages which had been then expunged. Some of the practices and expressions which, after the first ten or twenty years of the eighteenth century, were looked upon as all but confined to a party of Nonjurors, had been held almost as fully before yet the schism was thought of.

This was certainly the case in regard of those 'usages' which related to the sacrificial character of the Eucharist and to prayers for the dead. Dr. Hickes complained in one of his letters that the doctrine of the Eucharistic sacrifice had disappeared from the writings even of divines who had treated on the subject.[2] How far this was correct became, four years later, a disputed question. Bishop Trimnell declared it was a doctrine that had never been taught in the English Church since the Reformation.[3] John Johnson, on the other hand, vicar of Cranbrook, who had originated the controversy by a book in which he ardently supported the opinion in question, affirmed that no Christian bishop before Trimnell ever denied it.[4] Evidently it was a point which had not come very prominently forward for distinct assertion or contradiction, and one in which there was great room for ambiguity. To some it seemed a palpably new doctrine, closely trenching on a most dangerous portion of the Romish system, and likely to lead to gross superstition. To others it seemed a harmless and very edifying part of belief, wholly void of any Romish tendencies, and plainly implied, if not definitely expressed, in the English Liturgy. Most of the excellent and pious High Churchmen who have been spoken of in this paper treasured it as a

[1] Lathbury, 388. [2] Secretan, 37, 65.

[3] Hunt, 3, 257, and Cassan's *Lives of the Bishops of Winchester*, 379. Cassan, quoting from Noble, says Trimnell was a very good man, 'whom even the Tories valued, though he preached terrible Whig sermons.'

[4] Id.

valued article of their faith. Kettlewell used to dilate on the great sacrificial feast of charity.[1] Bull used constantly to speak of the Eucharist as no less a sacrifice commemorative of Christ's oblation of Himself than the Jewish sacrifices had been typical of it.[2] Dodwell, ever fruitful in learned instances, not only brought forward arguments from Scripture and the Fathers, but adduced illustrations from the bloodless sacrifices of Essenes and Pythagoreans.[3] Robert Nelson, after the example of Jeremy Taylor in his 'Holy Living and Dying,' introduced the subject in a more popular and devotional form in his book upon the Christian Sacrifice.[4] Archbishop Sharp regretted that a doctrine which he considered so instructive had not been more definitely contained in the English Liturgy, and preferred the Communion office of King Edward VI.'s Service Book.[5] Beveridge argued that if the Jews were to be punctual and constant in attending their sacrifices, how much more should Christians honour by frequent observance the great commemorative offering which had been instituted in their place, and contained within itself the benefits of them all.[6]

Some observations of a somewhat similar kind may be made in regard of prayers for the departed, another subject which the English Church has wisely left to private opinion. The nonjuring 'usages,' on the other hand, restored to the Liturgy the clauses which the better judgment of their ancestors had omitted. Some went farther, and insisted that 'prayer for their deceased brethren was not only lawful and useful, but their bounden duty.'[7] All of them, however, without exception, contested with perfect sincerity that their doctrine on these points was not that of Rome, and that they entirely repudiated, as baseless and unscriptural, the superstructure which that Church has raised upon it. The nonjuring separation drew away from the National Church many who as a matter of private opinion had held the tenet without rebuke; and although, in the middle of the eighteenth century, John Wesley stoutly defended it,[8] and Dr. Johnson always argued for its propriety and personally maintained the

[1] *Life of Kettlewell*, 56.
[2] Nelson's *Life of Bull*, 178.
[3] Brokesby's *Life of Dodwell*, 363.
[4] Secretan, 178–9. Teale, 297.
[5] *Sharp's Life*, by his Son, i. 355, and Secretan, 178.
[6] Beveridge's *Necessity and Advantage of Frequent Communion*, 1708.
[7] Lathbury, 302.
[8] In answer to Lavington, who charged him with prayers to that effect in his *Devotions for every day in the Week* (*Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists*, 157), Wesley answered, 'In this kind of general prayer for the faithful departed, I conceive myself to be clearly justified both by the earliest antiquity and by the Church of England.'—'Answer to Lavington,' *Works*, ix. 55, also 'Letter to Dr. Middleton,' *Works*, x. 9.

practice,[1] an idea gained ground that it was wholly unauthorised by the English Church and contrary to its spirit. But at the opening of the century it appears to have been a tenet not unfrequently maintained, especially among High Churchmen, whether Jurors or Nonjurors. Dr. I. Barrow, says Hearne, 'was mighty for it.'[2] In the form of prayer for Jan. 30th, 1661, there was a perfectly undisguised prayer of this kind, drawn up apparently by Archbishop Juxon.[3] It had however only the authority of the Crown, and was expunged in the authorised form of prayer for 1662. Archbishop Wake said he did not condemn the practice,[4] and Bishop Smalridge, already spoken of in the list of Robert Nelson's friends, is said to have been in favour of it.[5] So was Robert Nelson himself. After describing the death of his old and honoured friend Bishop Bull, he adds in reference to him and to his wife who had died previously: 'The Lord grant unto them that they may find mercy of the Lord in that day.'[6] Bishop Ken may be quoted to the same effect. Writing to Dr. Nicholas in October 1677, of the death of their friend Mr. Coles, 'cujus anima,' he continues, 'requiescat in pace.'[7] Dr. Ernest Grabe and Dean Hickes, two more of R. Nelson's intimate associates, were also accustomed to pray for those in either state.[8]

The Nonjurors and High Churchmen in general, no less than the rest of their countrymen, were stout Protestants, and gloried in the name. High Churchmen had stood in the van of that great contest with Rome which had so occupied the thoughts of theological writers and the whole English people during the later years of the preceding century, and the remembrance of which was still fresh. The acrimony of argument had been somewhat abated by the very general respect entertained in England for the great Gallican divines, Pascal, Fenelon, and Bossuet. Among the Nonjurors it was further softened by political and social considerations. English Roman Catholics were almost all Jacobites, and were therefore in close sympathy with them on a matter of very absorbing interest. But although these influences tended to remove prejudices, the gap that separates Anglican and Roman divinity remained wide as ever. When the Nonjurors, or a large section of them, cut themselves away from the National Church,

[1] *Boswell's Life*, i. 187, 191, ii. 166.

[2] Hearne's *Reliquiæ*, ii. 188.

[3] Lathbury, 302.

[4] Wake's *Three Tracts against Popery*, § 3. Quoted with much censure by Blackburne, *Historical View*, &c., 115.

[5] Lathbury, 300.

[6] Nelson's *Life of Bull*, 405.

[7] Bowles' *Life of Ken*, 38.

[8] Lathbury, 297, 302. The custom is spoken of as frequent among the High Churchmen of 1710–20.—*Life of Kennet*, 125.

they did not in their isolation look towards Rome. Even the most advanced among their leaders proved, by the energy with which they continued the Protestant controversy, how groundless was the charge sometimes brought against them, that they had adopted Popish doctrines.

It cannot be wondered at, that members of the nonjuring communion felt very keenly the isolated, and, so to say, the sectarian condition in which they were placed. There were few words dearer to them than that word 'Catholic,' which breathes of loving brotherhood in one great Christian body. And yet outside their own scanty fold they were repelled on every side. They had been ardently attached to the English Church, and had thought that whatever its imperfections might be in practice, its theory, at all events, approached to perfection. But now, to the minds of many of them, the ideal had passed away, or had become a shadow. Since, then, the Church in which they had been brought up had failed them, where should they find intercommunion and sympathy? Not among English Nonconformists. Although they might have been willing at one time to concede much to Nonconformist scruples, yet even as fellow-members in one national Church they would have represented opposite poles of ecclesiastical sentiment; and without such a mutual bond of union, the interval which separated Dissenters and Nonjurors was wider than ever it had been. To come to any terms with Rome was quite out of the question. Such an alliance would indeed be, as Kettlewell expressed it, 'concordia discors.'[1] Could they then combine with Lutherans or other foreign Protestants? This at one time seemed possible. English High Churchmen, Juror and Nonjuror, were inclined to be lenient to deficiencies abroad, in order and ritual, of which they would have been wholly intolerant at home. Even Dodwell, a man of singularly straitened and rigid views, thought the prospect not unhopeful. One condition, however, they laid down as absolutely indispensable—the restoration of a legitimate episcopate. But the chief promoters of the scheme died nearly coincidently; political questions of immediate concern interfered with its farther consideration, and thus the project was dropped. The Scotch Episcopal Church remained as a communion with which English Nonjurors could fraternise. Ken and Beveridge and Kettlewell, and English High Churchmen in general, had long regarded that Church with compassion, sympathy, and interest. Dr. Hickes, the acknowledged leader of the thorough Nonjurors, had become, as chaplain to the Earl of Lauderdale, well acquainted with its bishops; a large proportion

[1] *Life of Kettlewell*, 130.

of its clergy were Jacobites and Nonjurors; and, like themselves, they were a depressed and often persecuted remnant. The intimacy, therefore, between the Scotch Episcopalians and many of the English Nonjurors became, as is well known, very close.

There was, however, one other great body of Christians towards whom, after a time, the nonjuring separatists turned with proposals of amity and intercommunion. This was the Eastern Church. Various causes had contributed to remove something of the obscurity which had once shrouded this vast communion from the knowledge of Englishmen. As far back as the earlier part of Charles I.'s reign, the attention of either party in the English Church had been fixed for a time on the overtures made by Cyrillus Lukaris,[1] patriarch, first of Alexandria, and then of Constantinople, to whom we owe the precious gift of the 'Alexandrian manuscript' of the Scriptures. Archbishop Abbot, a Calvinist, and one of the first representatives of the so-called Latitudinarian party, had been attracted by the inclinations evinced by this remarkable man towards the theology of Holland and Geneva. His successor and complete opposite, Archbishop Laud, had been no less fascinated by the idea of closer intercourse with a Church of such ancient splendour and such pretensions to primitive orthodoxy. At the close of the seventeenth century this interest had been renewed by the visit of Peter the Great to this island. With a mind greedy after all manner of information, he had not omitted to inquire closely into ecclesiastical matters. People heard of his conversations on these subjects with Tenison and Burnet,[2] and wondered how far a monarch who was a kind of Pope in his own empire would be leavened with Western and Protestant ideas. In learned and literary circles too the Eastern Church had been discussed. The Oxford and Cambridge Platonists, than whom England has never produced more thoughtful and scholarlike divines, had profoundly studied the Alexandrian fathers. Patristic reading, which no one could yet neglect who advanced the smallest pretensions to theological acquirements, might naturally lead men to think with longing of an ideal of united faith 'professed' (to use Bishop Ken's familiar words) 'by the whole Church before the disunion of East and West.[3] Missionary feeling, which at the beginning of the eighteenth century was showing so many signs of nascent activity, had not failed to take notice of the

[1] A. P. Stanley's *Eastern Church*, 410.
[2] A. P. Stanley's *Eastern Church*, 453, 462.
[3] *Life of Ken*, by a Layman, 808.

gross ignorance into which many parts of Greek Christendom had fallen.[1] Henry Ludolph, a German by birth, and late secretary to Prince George of Denmark, on his return to London in 1694 from some lengthened travels in Russia, and after further wanderings a few years later in Egypt, Asia Minor, and the Holy Land, persuaded some English Churchmen to publish an impression of the New Testament in modern Greek, which was dispersed in those countries through the Greeks with whom Ludolph kept up a correspondence.[2] In 1701 University men at Cambridge, when Bentley was Vice Chancellor, were much interested by the visit of Neophytos, Archbishop of Philippopolis, and Exarch of Thrace. He was presented with a Doctor of Divinity's degree, and afterwards made a speech in Hellenistic Greek.[3] About the same time the minutes of the Christian Knowledge Society make report of a Catechism drawn up for Greek Churchmen by Bishop Williams of Chichester, and translated from the English by some Greeks then studying at Oxford.[4] This little colony of Greek students had been established in 1689, through the cordial relations then subsisting between Archbishop Sancroft and Georgirenes, Metropolitan of Samos, who had recently been a refugee in London. It was hoped that by their residence at Oxford they would be able to promote in their own country a better understanding of 'the true doctrine of the Church of England.' They were to be twenty in number, were to dwell together at Gloucester Hall (afterwards Worcester College), be habited all alike in the gravest sort of habit worn in their own country, and stay at the University for five years.[5] Robert Nelson, ever zealous and energetic in all the business of the society, would naturally feel particularly interested in the condition of Eastern Christians on account of the business connection with Smyrna in which his family had been prosperously engaged. We are told of his showing warm sympathy in the wish of the Archbishop of Gotchan in Armenia to get works of piety printed in that language.[6] Similar interest would be felt by another leader of the early Nonjurors, Frampton, Bishop of Gloucester, who in his earlier years had served as chaplain at

[1] Burnet, writing in 1694, remarking on 'the present depressed and ignorant state of the Greek Churches,' speaks also with warm sympathy of their poverty and persecution as 'a peculiar character of bearing the Cross.' —*Four Sermons, &c.*, 198.

[2] *Biographical Dictionary*, 'Ludolph.

[3] Christopher Wordsworth, *University Life in the Eighteenth Century*, 331.

[4] Secretan, 103. [5] Wordsworth, *University Life*, &c. 324–5.

[6] Teale, 362.—This was in 1707. Archbishop Sharp gave his help in furthering this work.—*Life*, i. 402.

Aleppo, and had formed a familiar acquaintance with some of the most learned patriarchs and bishops of the Eastern Church.[1] The man, however, who at the beginning of the eighteenth century must have done most to turn attention towards the Eastern Church, was Dr. Grabe, who has been already more than once spoken of as held in great esteem by the Nonjuring and High Church party. He had found the Anglican Church more congenial to him on the whole than any other, but it shared his sympathies with the Lutheran and the Greek. He was a constant daily attendant at the English, and more especially the nonjuring services, but for many years he communicated exclusively at the Greek Church. He also published a 'Defensio Græcæ Ecclesiæ.'[2] Thus, in many different ways, the Oriental Church had come to be regarded, especially by the more studious of the High Church clergy, in quite another light from that of Rome.

In 1716 Arsenius, Metropolitan of Thebais, came to London on a charitable mission in behalf of the suffering Christians of Egypt. It will be readily understood with what alacrity a number of the Scotch and English Nonjurors seized the opportunity of making 'a proposal for a concordat betwixt the orthodox and Catholic remnant of the British Churches and the Catholic and Apostolic Oriental Church.' The correspondence, of which a full account is given in Lathbury's History of the Nonjurors,[3] although in many respects an interesting one, was wholly abortive. There appears indeed to have been a real wish on the part of Peter the Great and of some of the patriarchs to forward the project; but the ecclesiastical synod of Russia was evidently not quite clear from whom the overtures proceeded. Their answers were directed 'To the Most Reverend the Bishops of the Catholic Church in Great Britain, our dearest brothers,' and, somewhat to the dismay of the Nonjurors, copies of the letters were even sent by the Patriarch of Jerusalem to Archbishop Wake. Above all, the proposals were essentially one-sided. The nonjuring bishops, while remaining perfectly faithful to their principles, were willing to make large concessions in points which involved no departure from what they considered to be essential truths. The Patriarchs would have been glad of intercommunion on their own terms, but in the true spirit of the Eastern Church, would concede nothing. It was 'not lawful either to add any thing or take away any thing' from 'what has been defined and determined by ancient Fathers and the Holy Œcumenical Synods

[1] Evans' *Life of Frampton*, 44.
[2] Secretan, ii. 220–2. Hearne's *Reliquiæ*, ii. 280.
[3] Pp. 309–59.

from the time of the apostles and their holy successors, the Fathers of our Church, to this time. We say that those who are disposed to agree with us must submit to them, with sincerity and obedience, and without any scruple or dispute. And this is a sufficient answer to what you have written.' Perhaps the result might not have been very different, even if the overtures in question had been backed by the authority of the whole Anglican Church—a communion which at this period was universally acknowledged as the leader of Protestant Christendom. And even if there were less immutability in Eastern counsels, Bishop Campbell and his coadjutors could scarcely have been sanguine in hoping for any other issue. Truth and right, as they remarked in a letter to the Czar, do not depend on numbers; but if the Oriental synod were thoroughly aware how exceedingly scanty was 'the remnant' with which they were treating, and how thoroughly apart from the main current of English national life, it was highly improbable that they would purchase so minute an advance towards a wider unity by authorising what would certainly seem to them innovations dangerously opposed to all ancient precedent. It must be some far greater and deeper movement that will first tempt the unchanging Eastern Church to approve of any deviation from the trodden path of immemorial tradition.

There was great variety of individual character in the group of Churchmen who have formed the subject of this chapter. They did not all come into contact with one another, and some were widely separated by the circumstances of their lives. The one fact of some being Jurors and some Nonjurors was quite enough in itself to make a vast difference of thoughts and sympathies among those who had taken different sides. But they were closely united in what they held to be the divinely appointed constitution of the Church. All looked back to primitive times as the unalterable model of doctrine, order, and government; all were firmly persuaded that the English Reformation was wholly based on a restoration of the ancient pattern, and had fallen short of its object only so far forth as that ideal had as yet been unattained; all looked with suspicion and alarm at such tendencies of their age as seemed to them to contradict and thwart the development of these principles. They were good men in a very high sense of the word, earnestly religious, bent upon a conscientious fulfilment of their duties, and centres, in their several spheres, of active Christian labours. Ken, Nelson, and Kettlewell, among Nonjurors—Bull, Beveridge, and Sharp, among those who accepted the change of dynasty—are names deservedly held in special honour by English Churchmen. Their

piety was of a type more frequent perhaps in the Church of England than in some other communions, very serious and devout, but wholly free from all gloom and moroseness ; tinged in some instances, as in Dodwell, Ken, and Hooper, with asceticism, but serene and bright, and guarded against extravagance and fanaticism by culture, social converse, and sound reading. Such men could not fail to adorn the faith they professed, and do honour to the Church in which they had been nurtured. At the same time, some of the tenets which they ardently maintained were calculated to foster a stiffness and narrowness, and an exaggerated insistence upon certain forms of Church government, which contained many elements of real danger. Within the National Church there was a great deal to counterbalance these injurious tendencies and check their growth. The Latitudinarian party, whose faults and temptations lay in a very opposite direction, was very strong. Ecclesiastical as well as political parties were no doubt strongly defined, and for a time strongly antagonistic. But wherever in a large body of men different views are equally tolerated, opinions will inevitably shade one into another to a great extent, and extreme or unpractical theories will be tempered and toned down, or be regarded at most as merely the views of a minority. Among the Nonjurors Henry Dodwell, for example, was a real power, as a man of holy life and profound learning, whose views, although carried to an extreme in which few could altogether concur, were still in general principle, and when stated in more moderate terms, those of the great majority of the whole body. As a member, on the other hand, of the National Church, his goodness and erudition were widely respected, but his theoretical extravagances were only the crotchets of a retired student, who advanced in their most extreme form the opinions of a party.

But, Jurors or Nonjurors, the very best men of the old High Church party certainly exhibited a strong bearing towards the faults of exclusiveness and ecclesiasticism. It was a serious loss to the English Church to be deprived of the services of such men as Ken and Kettlewell, but it would have been a great misfortune to it to have been represented only by men of their sentiments Their Christianity was as true and earnest as ever breathed in the soul ; nevertheless, there was much in it that could not fail to degenerate in spirits less pure and elevated than their own. They were apt to fall into the common error of making orthodoxy a far more strait and narrow path than was ever warranted by any terms of the Church apostolic or of the Church of their own country. Its strict limits, on all points which Scripture has left uncertain, had been, as it appeared to them, providentially main-

tained throughout the first three centuries. Then began a long period of still increasing error; until the time of reformation came, and the Church of England fulfilled its appointed task of retracing the old landmarks, and restoring primitive truth to its ancient purity. Allowing for such trifling modifications as the difference of time and change of circumstances absolutely necessitated, the Anglican was in their estimation the Ante-Nicene Church revived. If, in the doctrine, order, and government of the English Church there was anything which would not have approved itself to the early fathers and to the first Councils, it was so far forth a falling short of its fundamental principles. They were persuaded that at all events there was nowhere outside its borders such near approach to this perfection. As for other religious bodies, the degree of their separation from the spirit and constitution of the English Church might be fairly taken as the approximate measure of their departure from the practice of primitive antiquity. Romanism, Latitudinarianism, Mysticism, Calvinism, Puritanism—whatever form dissent might take from what they believed to be the true principles of the English Church, it was, as such, a departure from Catholic and orthodox tradition, it was but one or another phase of the odious sin of schism.

The High Anglican custom of appealing to early ecclesiastical records as an acknowledged standard of authority on all matters which Scripture has left uncertain, necessarily led this section of the English Church to repeat many of the failings as well as many of the virtues which had characterised the Church of the third and fourth centuries. It copied, for instance, far too faithfully, the disposition which primitive ages had early manifested, to magnify unduly the spiritual power and prerogatives of the priesthood. No doubt the outcry against sacerdotalism was often perverted to disingenuous uses. Many a hard blow was dealt against vital Christian doctrine under the guise of righteous war against the exorbitant pretensions of the clergy. But Sacerdotalism certainly attained a formidable height among some of the High Churchmen of the period, both Jurors and Nonjurors. Dodwell, who declined orders that he might defend all priestly rights from a better vantage ground, did more harm to the cause he had espoused than any one of its opponents, by fearlessly pressing the theory into consequences from which a less thorough or a more cautious advocate would have recoiled with dismay. Robert Nelson's sobriety of judgment and sound practical sense made him a far more effective champion. He too, like Dodwell, rejoiced that from his position as a layman he could without prejudice resist what he termed a sacrilegious invasion of the

rights of the priests of the Lord.[1] The beginning of the eighteenth century was felt to be a time of crisis in the contest which, for the last three or four hundred years, has been incessantly waged between those whose tendency is ever to reduce religion into its very simplest elements, and those, on the other hand, in whose eyes the whole order of Church government and discipline is a divinely constituted system of mysterious powers and superhuman influences. It is a contest in which opinions may vary in all degrees, from pure Deism to utter Ultramontanism. The High Churchmen in question insisted that their position, and theirs only, was precisely that of the Church in early post-Apostolic times, when doctrine had become fully defined, but was as yet uncorrupted by later superstitions. It was not very tenable ground, but it was held by them with a pertinacity and sincerity of conviction which deepened the fervour of their faith, even while it narrowed its sympathies and cramped it with restrictions. A Church in which they found what they demanded ; which was primitive and reformed ; which was free from the errors of Rome and Geneva ; which was not only Catholic and orthodox on all doctrines of faith, but possessed an apostolical succession, with the sacred privileges attached to it ; which was governed by a lawful and canonical episcopate ; which was blessed with a sound and ancient liturgy ; which was faithful (many Nonjurors would add) to its divinely appointed king ; such a Church was indeed one for which they could live and die. So far it was well. Their love for their own Church, and their perfect confidence in it, added both beauty and character to their piety. The misfortune was, that it left them unable to understand the merits of any form of faith which rejected, or treated as a thing indifferent, what they regarded as all but essential.

Fervid as their Christianity was, it was altogether unprogressive in its form. It was inelastic, incompetent to adapt itself to changing circumstances. Some of their leaders were inclined at one time to favour a scheme of comprehension. It is, however, impossible to believe they would have agreed to any concession which was not evidently superficial. They longed indeed for unity ; and there is no reason to believe that they would have hesitated to sacrifice, though it would not be without a pang, many points of ritual and ceremony if it would further so good an end. But in their scheme of theology the essentials of an orthodox Church were numerous, and they would have been inflexible against any compromise of these. To abandon any part of the inheritance of primitive times would be gross heresy, a

[1] Secretan, 195.

fatal dereliction of Christian duty. No one can read the letters of Bishop Ken without noticing how the calm and gentle spirit of that good prelate kindles into indignation at the thought of any departure from the ancient 'Depositum' of the Church. He did not fail to appreciate and love true Christian piety when brought into near contact with it, even in those whose principles, in what he considered essential matters, differed greatly from his own. He was on cordial, and even intimate terms of friendship, for example, with Mr. Singer, a Nonconformist gentleman of high standing, who lived in the neighbourhood of Longleat. But this only serves to illustrate that there is an unity of faith far deeper than very deeply marked outward distinctions, a bond of Christian communion which, when once its strength is felt, is stronger than the strongest theories. Where the stiffness of his 'Catholic and orthodox' opinions was not counteracted or mitigated by feelings of warm personal respect, Ken could only view with unmixed aversion the working of principles which paid little regard to Church authority and attached small importance to any part of a Church system that did not clearly rest on plain words of Scripture. No one, reading without farther information the frequent laments made in Ken's letters and poems, that his flock had been left without a shepherd, that it was no longer folded in Catholic and hallowed grounds, and that it was fed with empoisoned instead of wholesome food, would think how good a man his successor in the see of Bath and Wells really was. Bishop Kidder was 'an exemplary and learned man of the simplest and most charitable character.'[1] Robert Nelson had strongly recommended him to Archbishop Tillotson. But he held a Low Church view of the Sacraments; he was inclined to admit, on what some considered too lenient terms, Dissenters of high character into the ministry of the English Church; his reverence for primitive tradition was slight; he had no respect for doctrines of passive obedience and divine right. In Ken's eyes he was therefore a 'Latitudinarian Traditour.' The deprived bishop had no wish to resume his see. It was more than once offered to him in Queen Anne's reign, when the oath of allegiance would no longer have been an insuperable obstacle. But throughout the life of his first successor his anxiety about his former diocese was very great, and his satisfaction was extreme when Kidder was succeeded by Hooper, a bishop of kindred principles to his own. And Ken was in these respects a fair representative of many who thought with him. To them the Christian faith, not in its fundamentals only, but in all the principal accessories of its consti-

[1] Bowles' *Life of Ken*, 247.

tution and government, was stereotyped in forms which could not be departed from without heresy or schism. There was scarcely any margin left for self-adaptation to changed requirements and varied modes of thought, no ready scope for elasticity and development. As Christianity had been left in the age of the first three councils, so it was to remain until the end of time. The first reformers had reformed it from its corruptions once and for all. The guardians of its purity had only to walk loyally in their steps, carry out their principles, and not be misled by any so-called reformer of a later day, whose meddling hands would only have marred the finished beauty of an accomplished work of restoration.

Such opinions, when rich in vitality and warmth of conviction, have a very important function to fulfil. Admirably adapted to supply the spiritual wants of a certain class of minds, they represent one very important side of Christian truth. Good men such as those who have been the subject of this chapter are, in the Church, much what disinterested and patriotic Conservatives are in the State. It is their special function to resist needless changes and a too compliant subservience to new or popular ideas, to maintain unbroken the continuity of Christian thought, to guard from disparagement and neglect whatever was most valuable in the religious characteristics of an earlier age. Theirs is a school of thought which has neither a greater nor a less claim to genuine spirituality than that which is usually contrasted with it. Only its spirituality is wont to take, in many respects, a different tone. Instead of shrinking from forms which by their abuse may tend to formalism, and simplifying to the utmost all the accessories of worship, in jealous fear lest at any time the senses should be impressed at the expense of the spirit, it prefers rather to recognise as far as possible a lofty sacramental character in the institutions of religion, to see a meaning, and an inward as well as an outward beauty, in ceremonies and ritual, and to uphold a scrupulous and reverential observance of all sacred services, as conducing in a very high degree to spiritual edification. Churchmen of this type may often be blind to other sides of truth; they may rush into extremes; they may fall into grave errors of exclusiveness and prejudice. But if they certainly cannot become absolutely predominant in a Church without serious danger, they cannot become a weak minority without much detriment to its best interests. And since it is hopeless to find on any wide scale minds so happily tempered as to combine within themselves the best characteristics of different religious parties, a Church may well be congratulated which can count among its loyal and attached members many men on either side conspicuous for their high qualities.

The beginning of Queen Anne's reign was in this respect a period of great promise. Not only was the Church of England popular and its opponents weak, but both High and Low Churchmen had leaders of distinguished eminence. Tillotson and Stillingfleet had passed away, but the Low Church bishops, such as Patrick and Fleetwood, Burnet, Tenison, and Compton, held a very honourable place in general esteem. The High Churchmen no longer had Lake and Kettlewell, but Bull and Beveridge, Sharp, and Ken, and Nelson were still living, and held in high honour. This latter party had been rent asunder by the nonjuring schism. The breach, however, was not yet irreparable; and if it could be healed, and the cordial feeling could be restored which, under the influence of common Protestant sympathies, had begun to draw the two sections of the Church together, the National Church might seem likely to root itself more deeply in the attachment of the people than at any previous time since the Reformation. These fair promises were frustrated, and the opportunity lost. Before many years had passed there was a perceptible loss of tone and power in the Low Church party, when King William's bishops had gradually died off. Among High Churchmen, weakened by the secession, the growth of degeneracy was still more evident. The contrast is immense between the lofty-minded and single-hearted men who worked with Ken and Nelson and the factious partisans who won the applause of 'High Church' mobs in the time of Sacheverell. Perhaps the Church activity which, at all events in many notable instances, distinguished the first few years of the eighteenth century, is thrown into stronger relief by the comparative inertness which set in soon afterwards. For a few years there was certainly every appearance of a growing religious movement. Church brotherhoods were formed both in London and in many country towns and villages, missions were started, religious education was promoted, plans for the reformation of manners were ardently engaged in, churches were built, the weekly and daily services were in many places frequented by increasing congregations, and communicants rapidly increased. It might seem as if the Wesleyan movement was about to be forestalled, in general character though not in detail, under the full sanction and direction of some of the principal heads of the English Church; or as if the movement were begun, and only wanted such another leader as Wesley was. There was not enough fire in Robert Nelson's character for such a part. Yet, had he lived a little longer, the example of his deep devotion and untiring zeal might have kindled the flame in some younger men of congenial but more impetuous temperament, whose zeal would have

stirred the masses, and left a deep mark upon the history of the age.

As it was, things took a different course. The chief promoters of these noble efforts died, and much of their work died with them. Or it may be that the times were not yet ripe for such a revival. It may even have been better in the end for English Christianity, that no special period of religious excitement should interfere with the serious intellectual conflict, in which all who could give any attention to theology were becoming deeply interested. Great problems involved in the principles of the Reformation, but obscured up to that time by other and more superficial controversies, were being everywhere discussed. An interval of religious tranquillity amounting almost to stagnation may have been not altogether unfavourable to a crisis when the fundamental axioms of Christianity were being reviewed and tested. And, after all, dulness is not death. The responsibilities of each individual soul are happily not dependent upon unusual helps and extraordinary opportunities. Yet great efforts of what may be called missionary zeal are most precious, and fall like rain upon the thirsty earth. It is impossible not to feel disappointment that the practical energies which at the beginning of the eighteenth century seemed ready to expand into full life should have proved comparatively barren of permanent results. But though the effort was not seconded as it should have been, none the less honour is due to the exemplary men who made it. It was an effort by no means confined to any one section of the Church. There were few more earnest in it than many of the London clergy who had worked heart and soul with Tillotson. But wherever any great religious undertaking, any scheme of Christian benevolence, was under consideration, wherever any plan was in hand for carrying out more thoroughly and successfully the work of the Church, there at all events was Robert Nelson, and the pious, earnest-hearted Churchmen who enjoyed his friendship.

C. J. A.

CHAPTER III.

THE DEISTS.

Of the many controversies which were rife during the first half of the eighteenth century, none raised a question of greater importance than that which lay at the root of the Deistical controversy. That question was, in a word, this—How has God revealed Himself—how is He still revealing Himself to man? Is the

so-called written Word the only means—is it the chief means—is it even a means at all, by which the Creator makes His will known to His creatures? Admitting the existence of a God—and with a few insignificant exceptions this admission would have been made by all—What are the evidences of His existence and of His dealings with us?

During the whole period of pre-reformation Christianity in England, and during the century which succeeded the rupture between the Church of England and that of Rome, all answers to this question, widely though they might have differed in subordinate points, would at least have agreed in this—that *some* external authority, whether it were the Scripture as interpreted by the Church, or the Scripture and Church traditions combined, or the Scripture interpreted by the light which itself affords or by the inner light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, was necessary to manifest God to man. The Deists first ventured to hint that such authority was unnecessary; some even went so far as to hint that it was impossible. This at least was the tendency of their speculations; though it was not the avowed object of them. There was hardly a writer among the Deists who did not affirm that he had no wish to depreciate revealed truth. They all protested vigorously against the assumption that Deism was in any way opposed to Christianity rightly understood. 'Deism,' they said, 'is opposed to Atheism on the one side and to superstition on the other; but to Christianity—true, original Christianity—as it came forth from the hands of its founder, the Deists are so far from being opposed, that they are its truest defenders.' Whether their position was logically tenable is quite another question, but that they assumed it in all sincerity there is no reason to doubt.

It is, however, extremely difficult to assert or deny anything respecting the Deists as a body, for as a matter of fact they had no corporate existence. The writers who are generally grouped under the name wrote apparently upon no preconcerted plan. They formed no sect, properly so-called, and were bound by no creed. In this sense at least they were genuine 'freethinkers,' in that they freely expressed their thoughts without the slightest regard to what had been said or might be said by their friends or foes. It was the fashion among their contemporaries to speak of the Deists as if they were as distinct a sect as the Quakers, the Socinians, the Presbyterians, or any other religious denomination. But we look in vain for any common doctrine—any common form of worship which belonged to the Deists as Deists. As a rule, they showed no desire to separate themselves from communion with the National Church, although they were quite out of har-

mony both with the articles of its belief and the spirit of its prayers. A few negative tenets were perhaps more or less common to all. That no traditional revelation can have the same force of conviction as the direct revelation which God has given to all mankind—in other words, that what is called revealed religion must be inferior and subordinate to natural—that the Scriptures must be criticised like any other book, and no part of them be accepted as a revelation from God which does not harmonise with the eternal and immutable reason of things; that, in point of fact, the Old Testament is a tissue of fables and folly, and the New Testament has much alloy mingled with the gold which it contains; that Jesus Christ is not co-equal with the one God, and that his death can in no sense be regarded as an atonement for sin, are tenets which may be found in most of the Deistical writings; but beyond these negative points there is little or nothing in common between the heterogeneous body of writers who passed under the vague name of Deists. To complicate matters still further, the name 'Deist' was loosely applied as a name of reproach to men who, in the widest sense of the term, do not come within its meaning. Thus Cudworth, Tillotson, Locke, and Samuel Clarke were stigmatised as Deists by their enemies. On the other hand, men were grouped under the category whose faith did not rise to the level of Deism. Thus Hume is classified among the Deists. Yet if the term 'Deism' is allowed to have any definite meaning at all, it implies the certainty and obligation of natural religion. It is of its very essence that God has revealed himself so plainly to mankind that there is no necessity, as there is no sufficient evidence, for a better revelation. But Hume's scepticism embraced natural as well as revealed religion. Hobbes, again, occupies a prominent place among the Deists of the seventeenth century, although the whole nature of his argument in 'The Leviathan' is alien to the central thought of Deism. Add to all this, that the Deists proper were constantly accused of holding views which they never held, and that conclusions were drawn from their premisses which those premisses did not warrant, and the difficulty of treating the subject as a whole will be readily perceived. And yet treated it must be; the most superficial sketch of English Church History during the eighteenth century would be almost imperfect if it did not give a prominent place to this topic, for it was the all-absorbing topic of a considerable portion of the period.

The Deistical writers attracted attention out of all proportion to their literary merit. The pulpit rang with denunciations of their doctrines. The press teemed with answers to their arguments. It may seem strange that a mere handful of not very

voluminous writers, not one of whom can be said to have attained to the eminence of an English classic,[1] should have created such a vast amount of excitement. But the excitement was really caused by the subject itself, not by the method in which it was handled. The Deists only gave expression—often a very coarse and inadequate expression—to thoughts which the circumstances of the times could scarcely fail to suggest.

The Scriptures had for many years been used to sanction the most diametrically opposite views. They had been the watch-word of each party in turn whose extravagances had been the cause of all the disasters and errors of several generations. Romanists had quoted them when they condemned Protestants to the stake, Protestants when they condemned Jesuits to the block. The Roundhead had founded his wild reign of fanaticism on their authority. The Cavalier had texts ready at hand to sanction the most unconstitutional measures. 'The right divine of kings to govern wrong' had been grounded on Scriptural authority. All the strange vagaries in which the seventeenth century had been so fruitful claimed the voice of Scripture in their favour.

Such reckless use of Scripture tended to throw discredit upon it as a revelation from God; while, on the other hand, the grand discoveries in natural science which were a distinguishing feature of the seventeenth century equally tended to exalt men's notions of that other revelation of Himself which God has made in the Book of Nature. The calm attitude of the men of science who had been steadily advancing in the knowledge of the natural world, and by each fresh discovery had given fresh proofs of the power, and wisdom, and goodness of God, stood forth in painful contrast with the profitless wranglings and bitter animosities of Divines. Men might well begin to ask themselves whether they could not find rest from theological strife in natural religion? and the real object of the Deists was to demonstrate that they could.

Thus the period of Deism was the period of a great religious crisis in England. It is our present purpose briefly to trace the progress and termination of this crisis.

It is hardly necessary to remark that Deism was not a product of the eighteenth century. The spirit in which Deism appeared in its most pronounced form had been growing for many generations previous to that date. But we must pass over the earlier

[1] That is, not in virtue of anything he wrote which can be properly called Deism. Shaftesbury in his ethical and Bolingbroke in his political writings may perhaps be termed classical writers, but neither of them qua Deists.

Deists, of whom the most notable was Lord Herbert of Cherbury, and come at once to a writer who, although his most notorious work was published before the seventeenth century closed, lived and wrote during the eighteenth, and may fairly be regarded as belonging to that era.

No work which can be properly called Deistical had raised anything like the excitement which was caused by the anonymous publication in 1696 of a short and incomplete treatise entitled 'Christianity not Mysterious, or a Discourse showing that there is nothing in the Gospel contrary to Reason nor above it, and that no Christian Doctrine can properly be called a Mystery.' In the second edition, published the same year, the author discovered himself to be a young Irishman of the name of John Toland, who had been brought up a Roman Catholic. Leland passes over this work with a slight notice; but it marked a distinct epoch in Deistical literature. For the first time, the secular arm was brought to bear upon a writer of this school. The book was presented by the Grand Jury of Middlesex, and was burnt by the hands of the hangman in Dublin by order of the Irish House of Commons. It was subsequently condemned as heretical and impious by the Lower House of Convocation, which body felt itself bitterly aggrieved when the Upper House refused to confirm the sentence. These official censures were a reflex of the opinions expressed out of doors. Pulpits rang with denunciations and confutations of the new heretic, especially in his own country. A sermon against him was 'as much expected as if it had been prescribed in the rubric;' an Irish peer gave it as a reason why he had ceased to attend church that once he heard something there about his Saviour Jesus Christ, but now all the discourse was about one John Toland.[1]

Toland being a vain man rather enjoyed this notoriety than otherwise; but if his own account of the object of his publication be correct (and there is no reason to doubt his sincerity), he was singularly unsuccessful in impressing his real meaning upon his contemporaries. He affirmed that 'he wrote his book to defend Christianity, and prayed that God would give him grace to vindicate religion,' and at a later period he published his creed in terms that would satisfy the most orthodox Christian.

For an explanation of the extraordinary discrepancy between the avowed object of the writer and the alleged tendency of his book we naturally turn to the work itself. After stating the conflicting views of divines about the Gospel mysteries, the author maintains that there is nothing in the Gospel contrary to reason

[1] See Hunt's *Religious Thought in England*, vol. ii. p. 244.

nor above it, and that no Christian doctrine can be properly called a mystery. He then defines the functions of reason, and proceeds to controvert the two following positions, (1) that though reason and the Gospel are not in themselves contradictory, yet according to our conception of them they may seem directly to clash ; and (2) that we are to adore what we cannot comprehend. He declares that what Infinite Goodness has not been pleased to reveal to us, we are either sufficiently capable of discovering ourselves or need not understand at all. He affirms that 'mystery' in the New Testament is never put for anything inconceivable in itself or not to be judged by our ordinary faculties ; and concludes by showing that mysteries in the present sense of the term were imported into Christianity partly by Judaisers, but mainly by the heathen introducing their old mysteries into Christianity when they were converted.

The stir which this small work created, marks a new phase in the history of Deism. Compared with Lord Herbert's elaborate treatises, it is an utterly insignificant work ; but the excitement caused by Lord Herbert's books was as nothing when compared with that which Toland's fragment raised. The explanation may perhaps be found in the fact that at the later date men's minds were more at leisure to consider the questions raised than they were at the earlier, and also that they perceived, or fancied they perceived, more clearly the drift of such speculations. A little tract, published towards the end of the seventeenth century, entitled 'The Growth of Deism,' brings out these points ; and as a matter of fact we find that for the next half century the minds of all classes were on the alert—some in sympathy with, many more in bitter antagonism against Deistical speculations. In his later writings, Toland went much further in the direction of infidelity, if not of absolute Atheism, than he did in his first work.

The next writer who comes under our notice was a greater man in every sense of the term than Toland. Lord Shaftesbury's 'Miscellaneous Essays,' which were ultimately grouped in one work, under the title of 'Characteristics of Men and Manners, &c.,' only bear incidentally upon the points at issue between the Deists and the orthodox But scattered here and there are passages which show how strongly the writer felt upon the subject. Leland was called to account, and half apologises for ranking Shaftesbury among the Deists at all.[1] And there certainly is one point of view from which Shaftesbury's speculations

[1] *View of the Deistical Writers,* Letter V. p. 32, &c., and Letter VI. p. 43, &c.

may be regarded not only as Christian, but as greatly in advance of the Christianity of many of the orthodox writers of his day. As a protest against the selfish, utilitarian view of Christianity which was utterly at variance with the spirit displayed and inculcated by Him 'who pleased not Himself,' Lord Shaftesbury's work deserves the high tribute paid to it by its latest editor, 'as a monument to immutable morality and Christian philosophy which has survived many changes of opinion and revolutions of thought.'[1] But from another point of view we shall come to a very different conclusion.

Shaftesbury was regarded by his contemporaries as a decided and formidable adversary of Christianity. Pope told Warburton,[2] 'that to his knowledge "The Characteristics" had done more harm to Revealed Religion in England than all the works of Infidelity put together.' Voltaire called him 'even a too vehement opponent of Christianity.' Warburton, while admitting his many excellent qualities both as a man and as a writer, speaks of 'the inveterate rancour which he indulged against Christianity.'[3]

A careful examination of Shaftesbury's writings can hardly fail to lead us to the same conclusion. He writes, indeed, as an easy, well-bred man of the world, and was no doubt perfectly sincere in his constantly repeated disavowal of any wish to disturb the existing state of things. But his reason obviously is that 'the game would not be worth the candle.' No one can fail to perceive a contemptuous irony in many passages in which Shaftesbury affirms his orthodoxy, or when he touches upon the persecution of the early Christians, or upon the mysteries of Christianity, or upon the sacred duty of complying with the established religion with unreasoning faith, or upon his presumed scepticism, or upon the nature of the Christian miracles, or upon the character of our Blessed Saviour, or upon the representation of God in the Old Testament, or upon the supposed omission of the virtue of friendship in the Christian system of ethics.

It is needless to quote the passages in which Shaftesbury, like the other Deists, abuses the Jews; neither is it necessary to dwell upon his strange argument that ridicule is the best test of truth. In this, as in other parts of his writings, it is often difficult to see when he is writing seriously, when ironically. Perhaps he has himself furnished us with the means of solving the difficulty. 'If,' he writes, 'men are forbidden to speak their

[1] The Rev. W. M. Hatch. See his dedication.

[2] See Warburton's Letters to Hurd, Letter XVIII. January 30, 1749–50.

[3] See Warburton's *Dedication of the Divine Legation of Moses to the Freethinkers*. Jeffery, another contemporary, writes to the same effect.

minds seriously on certain subjects, they will do it ironically. If they are forbidden to speak at all upon such subjects, or if they find it really dangerous to do so, they will then redouble their disguise, involve themselves in mysteriousness, and talk so as hardly to be understood or at least not plainly interpreted by those who are disposed to do them a mischief.'[1] The general tendency, however, of his writings is pretty clear, and is in harmony with the Deistical theory that God's revelation of Himself in Nature is certain, clear, and sufficient for all practical purposes, while any other revelation is uncertain, obscure, and unnecessary. But he holds that it would be unmannerly and disadvantageous to the interests of the community to act upon this doctrine in practical life. 'Better take things as they are. Laugh in your sleeve, if you will, at the follies which priestcraft has imposed upon mankind; but do not show your bad taste and bad humour by striving to battle against the stream of popular opinion. When you are at Rome, do as Rome does. The question "What is truth?" is a highly inconvenient one. If you must ask it, ask it to yourself.'

It must be confessed that such low views of religion and morality are strangely at variance with the exalted notions of the disinterestedness of virtue which form the staple of one of Shaftesbury's most important treatises. To reconcile the discrepancy seems impossible. Only let us take care that while we emphatically repudiate the immoral compromise between truth and expediency which Shaftesbury recommends, we do not lose sight of the real service which he has rendered to religion as well as philosophy by showing the excellency of virtue in itself without regard to the rewards and punishments which are attached to its pursuit or neglect.

The year before 'The Characteristics' appeared as a single work (1713), a small treatise was published anonymously which was at first assigned to the author of 'Christianity not Mysterious,' and which almost rivalled that notorious work in the attention which it excited, out of all proportion to its intrinsic merits. It was entitled 'A Discourse of Freethinking, occasioned by the Rise and Growth of a Sect called Freethinkers,' and was presently owned as the work of Anthony Collins, an author who had previously entered into the lists of controversy in connection with the disputes of Sacheverell, Dodwell, and Clarke. 'The Discourse of Freethinking' was in itself a slight performance. Its general scope was to show that every man has a right to think freely on all religious as well as other subjects, and that the

[1] *Sensus Communis* (on the Freedom of Wit and Humour), § 4.

exercise of this right is the sole remedy for the evil of superstition. The necessity of freethinking is shown by the endless variety of opinions which priests hold about all religious questions. Then the various objections to Freethinking are considered, and the treatise ends with a list and description of wise and virtuous Freethinkers—nineteen in number—from Socrates to Tillotson.

In estimating the merits of this little book, and in accounting for the excitement which it produced, we must not forget that what may now appear to us truisms were 170 years ago new truths, even if they were recognised as truths at all. At the beginning of the eighteenth century it was not an unnecessary task to vindicate the right of every man to think freely; and if Collins had performed the work which he had taken in hand fully and fairly he might have done good service. But while professedly advocating the duty of thinking freely, he showed so obvious a bias in favour of thinking in a particular direction, and wrested facts and quoted authorities in so one-sided a manner, that he laid himself open to the just strictures of many who valued and practised equally with himself the right of freethinking. Some of the most famous men of the day at once entered into the lists against him, amongst whom were Hoadly,[1] Swift, Whiston, Berkeley, and above all Bentley. The latter, under the title of 'Phileleutherus Lipsiensis,' wrote in the character of a German Lutheran to his English friend, Dr. Francis Hare, 'Remarks on a Discourse on Freethinking.' Regarded as a piece of intellectual gladiatorship the Remarks are justly entitled to the fame they have achieved. The great critic exposed unmercifully and unanswerably Collins's slips in scholarship, ridiculed his style, made merry over the rising and growing sect which professed its competency to think *de quolibet ente*, protested indignantly against putting the Talapoins of Siam on a level with the whole clergy of England, 'the light and glory of Christianity,' and denied the right of the title of Freethinkers to men who brought scandal on so good a word.

Bentley hit several blots, not only in Collins, but in others of the 'rising and growing sect.' The argument, *e.g.*, drawn from the variety of readings in the New Testament, is not only demolished but adroitly used to place his adversary on the horns of a

[1] Hoadly in one sense may be regarded as a 'Freethinker' himself; but it was the very fact that he was so which made him resent Collins's perversion of the term. The first of his 'Queries to the Author of a Discourse of Freethinking' is 'Whether that can be justly called Freethinking which is manifestly thinking with the utmost slavery; and with the strongest prejudices against every branch, and the very foundation of all religion?'—Hoadly's *Works*, vol. i.

dilemma. Nothing again, can be neater than his answer to various objections by showing that those objections had been brought to light by Christians themselves. And yet the general impression, when one has read Collins and Bentley carefully, is that there is a real element of truth in the former to which the latter has not done justice ; that Bentley presses Collins's arguments beyond their logical conclusion ; that Collins is not what Bentley would have him to be—a mere Materialist—an Atheist in disguise ; that Bentley's insinuation, that looseness of living is the cause of his looseness of belief, is ungenerous, and requires proof which Bentley has not given ; that the bitter abuse which he heaps upon his adversary as 'a wretched gleaner of weeds,' 'a pert teacher of his betters,' 'an unsociable animal,' 'an obstinate and intractable wretch,' and much more to the same effect, is unworthy of a Christian clergyman, and calculated to damage rather than do service to the cause which he has at heart.

Collins himself was not put to silence. Besides other writings of minor importance, he published in 1724 the most weighty of all his works, a 'Discourse on the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion.' The object of this book is to show that Christianity is entirely founded on the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies, and then to prove that these prophecies were fulfilled not in a literal, but only in a typical or secondary sense. Novelty, he argues, is a weighty reproach against any religious institution ; the truth of Christianity must depend upon the old dispensation ; it is founded on Judaism. Jesus makes claim to obedience only so far as He is the Messias of the Old Testament ; the fundamental article of Christianity is that Jesus of Nazareth is the Jewish Messiah, and this can only be known out of the Old Testament. In fact, the Old Testament is the *only* canon of Christians ; for the New Testament is not a law book for the ruling of the Church. The Apostles rest their proof of Christianity only on the Old Testament. If this proof is valid, Christianity is strong and built upon its true grounds ; if weak, Christianity is false. For no miracles, no authority of the New Testament can prove its truth ; miracles can only be a proof so far as they are comprehended in and exactly consonant with the prophecies concerning the Messias. It *is* only in this sense that Jesus appeals to His miracles. Christianity, in a word, is simply the allegorical sense of the Old Testament, and therefore may be rightly called 'Mystical Judaism.'

As all this bore the appearance of explaining away Christianity altogether, or at least of making it rest upon the most shadowy and unsubstantial grounds, there is no wonder that it called forth a vehement opposition : no less than thirty-five

answerers appeared within two years of its publication, among whom are found the great names of T. Sherlock, Zachary Pearce, S. Clarke, and Dr. Chandler. The latter wrote the most solid and profound, if not the most brilliant work which the Deistical controversy had yet called forth.

But the strangest outcome of Collins's famous book was the work of Woolston, an eccentric writer who is generally classed among the Deists, but who was in fact *sui generis*. In the Collins Controversy, Woolston appears as a moderator between an infidel and an apostate, the infidel being Collins, and the apostate the Church of England, which had left the good old paths of allegory to become slaves of the letter. In this, as in previous works, he rides his hobby, which was a strange perversion of patristic notions, to the death; and a few years later he returned to the charge in one of the wildest, craziest books that ever was written by human pen. It was entitled 'Six Discourses on the Miracles,' and in it the literal interpretation of the New Testament miracles is ridiculed with the coarsest blasphemy, while the mystical interpretations which he substitutes in its place read like the disordered fancies of a sick man's dream. He professes simply to follow the fathers, ignoring the fact that the fathers, as a rule, had grafted their allegorical interpretation upon the literal history, not substituted the one for the other. Woolston was the only Deist—if Deist he is to be called,—who as yet had suffered anything like persecution; indeed, with one exception, and that a doubtful one, he was the only one who ever did. He was brought before the King's Bench, condemned to pay 25*l.* for each of his Six Discourses, and to suffer a year's imprisonment; after which he was only to regain his liberty upon finding either two securities for 1,000*l.* or four for 500*l.*; as no one would go bail for him, he remained in prison until his death in 1731. The punishment was a cruel one, considering the state of the poor man's mind, of the disordered condition of which he was himself conscious. If he deserved to lose his liberty at all, an asylum would have been a more fitting place of confinement for him than a prison. But if we regard his writings as the writings of a sane man, which, strange to say, his contemporaries appear to have done, we can hardly be surprised at the fate he met with. Supposing that *any* blasphemous publication deserved punishment—a supposition which in Woolston's days would have been granted as a matter of course—it is impossible to conceive anything more outrageously blasphemous than what is found in Woolston's wild book. The only strange part of the matter was that it should have been treated seriously at all. 30,000 copies of his discourses on the miracles were sold

quickly and at a very dear rate ; whole bales of them were sent over to America. Sixty adversaries wrote against him ; and the Bishop of London thought it necessary to send five pastoral letters to the people of his diocese on the subject.

The works of Woolston were, however, in one way important, inasmuch as they called the public attention to the miracles of our Lord, and especially to the greatest miracle of all—His own Resurrection. The most notable of the answers to Woolston was Thomas Sherlock's 'Tryal of the Witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus.' This again called forth an anonymous pamphlet entitled 'The Resurrection of Jesus considered,' by a 'moral philosopher,' who afterwards proved to be one Peter Annet. In no strict sense of the term can Annet be called a Deist, though he is often ranked in that class. His name is, however, worth noticing, from his connection with the important and somewhat curiously conducted controversy respecting the Resurrection, to which Sherlock's 'Tryal of the Witnesses' gave both the impulse and the form. Annet, like Woolston, was prosecuted for blasphemy and profanity ; and if the secular arm should ever be appealed to in such matters, which is doubtful, he deserved it by the coarse ribaldry of his attacks upon sacred things.

It has been thought better to present at one view the works which were written on the miracles. This, however, is anticipating. The year after the publication of Woolston's discourses, and some years before Annet wrote, by far the most important work which ever appeared on the part of the Deists was published. Hitherto Deism had mainly been treated on its negative or destructive side. The mysteries of Christianity, the limitations to thought which it imposes, its system of rewards and punishments, its fulfilment of prophecy, its miracles, had been in turn attacked. The question then naturally arises, 'What will you substitute in its place?' or rather, to put the question as a Deist would have put it, 'What will you substitute in the place of the popular conception of Christianity?' for this alone, not Christianity itself, Deism professed to attack. In other words, 'What is the positive or constructive side of Deism?'

This question Tindal attempts to answer in his 'Christianity as old as the Creation.' The answer is a plain one, and the arguments by which he supports it are repeated with an almost wearisome iteration. 'The religion of nature,' he writes, 'is absolutely perfect ; Revelation can neither add to nor take from its perfection.' 'The law of nature has the highest internal excellence, the greatest plainness, simplicity, unanimity, universality, antiquity, and eternity. It does not depend upon the uncertain meaning of words and phrases in dead languages, much

less upon types, metaphors, allegories, parables, or on the skill or honesty of weak or designing transcribers (not to mention translators) for many ages together, but on the immutable relation of things always visible to the whole world.' Tindal is fond of stating the question in the form of a dilemma. 'The law of nature,' he writes, 'either is or is not a perfect law; if the first, it is not capable of additions; if the last, does it not argue want of wisdom in the Legislator in first enacting such an imperfect law, and then in letting it continue thus imperfect from age to age, and at last thinking to make it absolutely perfect by adding some merely positive and arbitrary precepts?' And again, 'Revelation either bids or forbids men to use their reason in judging of all religious matters; if the former, then it only declares that to be our duty which was so, independent of and antecedent to revelation; if the latter, then it does not deal with men as rational creatures. Everyone is of this opinion who says we are not to read Scripture with freedom of assenting or dissenting, just as we judge it agrees or disagrees with the light of nature and reason of things.' Coming more definitely to the way in which we are to treat the written word, he writes: 'Admit all for Scripture that tends to the honour of God, and nothing which does not.' Finally, he sums up by declaring in yet plainer words the absolute identity of Christianity with natural religion. 'God never intended mankind should be without a religion, or could ordain an imperfect religion; there must have been from the beginning a religion most perfect, which mankind at all times were capable of knowing; Christianity is this perfect, original religion.'

In this book Deism reaches its climax. The sensation which it created was greater than even Toland or Collins had raised. No less than one hundred and fifteen answers appeared, one of the most remarkable of which was Conybeare's 'Defence of Revealed Religion against "Christianity as old as the Creation."' Avoiding the scurrility and personality which characterised and marred most of the works written on both sides of the question, Conybeare discusses in calm and dignified, but at the same time luminous and impressive language, the important question which Tindal had raised. Doing full justice to the element of truth which Tindal's work contained, he unravels the complications in which it is involved, shows that the author had confused two distinct meanings of the phrase 'natural reason' or 'natural religion,' viz. (1) that which is *founded* on the nature and reason of things, and (2) that which is *discoverable* by man's natural power of mind, and distinguishes between that which is perfect in its kind and that which is absolutely perfect. This powerful

work is but little known in the present day. But it was highly appreciated by Conybeare's contemporaries, and the German historian of English Deism hardly knows how to find language strong enough to express his admiration of its excellence.[1]

But Tindal had the honour of calling forth a still stronger adversary than Conybeare. Butler's 'Analogy' deals with the arguments of 'Christianity as old as the Creation' more than with those of any other book; but as this was not avowedly its object, and as it covered a far wider ground than Tindal did, embracing in fact the whole range of the Deistical controversy, it will be better to postpone the consideration of this masterpiece until the sequel.

By friend and foe alike Tindal seems to have been regarded as the chief exponent of Deism. Skelton in his 'Deism revealed' (published in 1748) says that 'Tindal is the great apostle of Deism who has gathered together the whole strength of the party, and his book is become the bible of all Deistical readers.' Warburton places him at the head of his party, classifying the Deists, 'from the mighty author of "Christianity as old as the Creation," to the drunken, blaspheming cobbler who wrote against Jesus and the Resurrection.'[2] The subsequent writers on the Deistical side took their cue from Tindal, thus showing the estimation in which his book was held by his own party.

Tindal was in many respects fitted for the position which he occupied. He was an old man when he wrote his great work, and had observed and taken an interest in the whole course of the Deistical controversy for more than forty years. He had himself passed through many phases of religion, having been a pupil of Hickes the Nonjuror, at Lincoln College, Oxford, then a Roman Catholic, then a Low Churchman, and finally, to use his own designation of himself, 'a Christian Deist.' He had, no doubt, carefully studied the various writings of the Deists and their opponents, and had detected the weak points of all. His book is written in a comparatively temperate spirit, and the subject is treated with great thoroughness and ability. Still it

[1] 'Conybeare, dessen Vertheidigung der geoffenbarten Religion die gediegenste Gegenschrift ist, die gegen Tindal erschien. Es ist eine logische Klarheit, eine Einfachheit der Darstellung, eine überzeugende Kraft der Beweisführung, ein einleuchtender Zusammenhang des Ganzen verbunden mit würdiger Haltung der Polemik, philosophischer Bildung und freier Liberalität des Standpunkts in diesem Buch, vermöge welcher es als meisterhaft anerkannt werden muss.'—Lechler's *Geschichte des Englischen Deismus*, p. 362. Warburton calls Conybeare's one of the best reasoned books in the world.

[2] See Watson's *Life of Warburton*, p. 293.

has many drawbacks, even from a literary point of view. It is written in the wearisome form of dialogue, and the writer falls into that error to which all controversial writers in dialogue are peculiarly liable. When a man has to slay giants of his own creation, he is sorely tempted to make his giants no stronger than dwarfs. To this temptation Tindal yielded. His defender of orthodoxy is so very weak, that a victory over him is no great achievement. Again, there is a want of order and lucidity in his book, and not sufficient precision in his definitions. But the worst fault of all is the unfairness of his quotations, both from the Bible and other books.

Perhaps one reason why, in spite of these defects, the book exercised so vast an influence is, that the minds of many who sympathised with the destructive process employed by preceding Deists may have begun to yearn for something more constructive. They might ask themselves, 'What then *is* our religion to be?' And Tindal answers the question after a fashion. 'It is to be the religion of nature, and an expurgated Christianity in so far as it agrees with the religion of nature.' The answer is a somewhat vague one, but better than none, and as such may have been welcomed. This, however, is mere conjecture.

Deism, as we have seen, had now reached its zenith; henceforth its history is the history of a rapid decline. Tindal did not live to complete his work; but after his death it was taken up by far feebler hands.

Dr. Morgan in a work entitled 'The Moral Philosopher, or a Dialogue between Philalethes a Christian Deist, and Theophanes a Christian Jew,' follows closely in Tindal's footsteps. Like him, he insists upon the absolute perfection of the law or religion of nature, of which Christianity is only a republication. Like him, he professes himself a Christian Deist and vigorously protests against being supposed to be an enemy to Christianity. But his work is inferior to Tindal's in every respect. It is an ill-written book. It is mainly directed against the Jewish economy. But Morgan takes a far wider range than this, embracing the whole of the Old Testament, which he appears to read backward, finding objects of admiration in what are there set before us as objects of reprobation and *vice versa*.

But though Morgan deals mainly with the Old Testament, he throws considerable doubt in his third volume upon the New. The account given of the life of Christ, still more, that of His Resurrection, and above all, the miracles wrought by His apostles, are all thrown into discredit.[1]

[1] *Ibid.* iii. 133, 190, 201, 261.

On the whole, this book marks a distinct epoch in the history of English Deism. There is little indeed said by Morgan which had not been insinuated by one or other of his predecessors, but the point to be marked is that it *was* now said, not merely insinuated. The whole tone of the book indicates 'the beginning of the end' not far distant, that end being what Lechler calls 'the dissolution of Deism into Scepticism.'

But there is yet one more author to be noticed whose works were still written in the earlier vein of Deism. So far Deism had not found a representative writer among the lower classes. The aristocracy and the middle class had both found exponents of their views ; but Deism had penetrated into lower strata of society than these, and at length a very fitting representative of this part of the community appeared in the person of Thomas Chubb. Himself a working man, and to a great extent self-educated, Chubb had had peculiar opportunities of observing the mind of the class to which he belonged. His earlier writings were not intended for publication, but were written for the benefit of a sort of debating club of working men of which he was a member. He was with difficulty persuaded to publish them, mainly through the influence of the famous William Whiston, and henceforth became a somewhat voluminous writer, leaving behind him at his death a number of tracts and essays, which were published together under the title of 'Chubb's Posthumous Works.' In his main arguments Chubb, like Morgan, follows closely in the wake of Tindal. But his view of Deism was distinctly from the standpoint of the working man. As Morgan had directed his attention mainly to the Old Testament, Chubb directed his mainly to the New. Like others of his school, he protests against being thought an enemy to Christianity. His two works 'The True Gospel of Jesus Christ asserted,' and 'The True Gospel of Jesus Christ vindicated,' give the best exposition of Chubb's views. 'Our Lord Jesus Christ' he writes, 'undertook to be a reformer, and in consequence thereof a Saviour. The true Gospel is this : (1) Christ requires a conformity of mind and life to that eternal and unalterable rule of action which is founded in the reason of things, and makes that the only ground of divine acceptance, and the only and sure way to life eternal. (2) If by violation of the law they have displeased God, he requires repentance and reformation as the only and sure ground of forgiveness. (3) There will be a judgment according to works. This Gospel wrought a change which by a figure of speech is called "a new birth"' (§ 13). Like Tindal, he contrasts the certainty of natural with the uncertainty of any traditional religion. He owns 'the Christian revelation

was expedient because of the general corruption ; but it was no more than a publication of the original law of nature, and tortured and made to speak different things.'[1] He repeats Tindal's objection to the want of universality of revealed religion on the same grounds. His chief attacks were, as has been said, made upon the New Testament. He demurs to the acceptance of the Gospels as infallibly true.

Chubb expresses just those difficulties and objections which would naturally have most weight with the more intelligent portion of the working classes. Speculative questions are put comparatively in the background. His view of the gospel is just that plain practical view which an artisan could grasp without troubling himself about transcendental questions, on the nice adjustment of which divines disputed. 'Put all such abstruse matters aside,' Chubb says in effect to his fellow-workmen, 'they have nothing to do with the main point at issue, they are no parts of the true Gospel.' His rocks of offence, too, are just those against which the working man would stumble. The shortcomings of the clergy had long been part of the stock-in-trade of almost all the Deistical writers. Their supposed wealth and idleness gave, as was natural, special offence to the representative of the working classes. He attacks individual clergymen, inveighs against the 'unnatural coalition of Church and State,'[2] and speaks of men living in palaces like kings, clothing themselves in fine linen and costly apparel, and faring sumptuously.

The lower and lower-middle classes have always been peculiarly sensitive to the dangers of priestcraft and a relapse into Popery. Accordingly Chubb constantly appealed to this anti-Popish feeling.[3]

Chubb, being an illiterate man, made here and there slips of scholarship, but he wrote in a clear, vigorous, sensible style, and his works had considerable influence over those to whom they were primarily addressed.

The cause of Deism in its earlier sense was now almost extinct. Those who were afterwards called Deists really belong to a different school of thought. A remarkable book, which was partly the outcome, partly, perhaps, the cause of this altered state of feeling, was published by Dodwell the younger, in 1742.

[1] *Enquiry into the Ground and Foundation of the Christian Religion*, p. 59.

[2] See *Enquiry concerning Redemption.*

[3] See his *Discourse concerning Reason*, p. 23, and his *Reflections upon the comparative excellence and usefulness of Moral and Positive Duties*, p. 27, &c.

It was entitled 'Christianity not founded on argument,' and there was at first a doubt whether the author wrote as a friend or an enemy of Christianity. He was nominally opposed to both, for both the Deists and their adversaries agreed that reason and revelation were in perfect harmony. The Deist accused the Orthodox of sacrificing reason at the shrine of revelation, the Orthodox accused the Deist of sacrificing revelation at the shrine of reason; but both sides vehemently rupudiated the charge. The Orthodox was quite as anxious to prove that his Christianity was not unreasonable, as the Deist was to prove that his rationalism was not anti-Christian.

Now the author of 'Christianity not founded on argument' came forward to prove that both parties were attempting an impossibility. In opposition to everything that had been written on both sides of the controversy for the last half century, Dodwell protested against all endeavours to reconcile the irreconcilable.

His work is in the form of a letter to a young Oxford friend, who was assumed to be yearning for a rational faith, 'as it was his duty to prove all things.' 'Rational faith!' says Dodwell in effect, 'the thing is impossible; it is a contradiction in terms. If you must prove all things, you will hold nothing. Faith is commanded men as a duty. This necessarily cuts it off from all connection with reason. There is no clause providing that we should believe if we have time and ability to examine, but the command is peremptory. It is a duty for every moment of life, for every age. Children are to be led early to believe, but this, from the nature of the case, cannot be on rational grounds. Proof necessarily presupposes a suspension of conviction. The rational Christian must have begun as a Sceptic; he must long have doubted whether the Gospel was true or false. Can this be the faith that "overcometh the world"? Can this be the faith that makes a martyr? No! the true believer must open Heaven and see the Son of Man standing plainly before his eyes, not see through the thick dark glass of history and tradition. The Redeemer Himself gave no proofs; He taught as one having authority, as a Master who has a right to dictate, who brought the teaching which He imparted straight from Heaven. In this view of the ground of faith, unbelief is a rebellious opposition against the working of grace. The union of knowledge and faith is no longer nonsense. All difficulties are chased away by the simple consideration "that with men it is impossible, but with God all things are possible." Philosophy and religion are utterly at variance. The groundwork of philosophy is all doubt and suspicion; the groundwork of religion is all submission and faith.

The enlightened scholar of the Cross, if he regards the one thing needful, rightly despises all lower studies. When he turns to these he leaves his own proper sphere. Julian was all in the wrong when he closed the philosophical schools to the Christians. He should have given them all possible privileges that they might undermine the principles of Christ. "Not many wise men after the flesh are called." All attempts to establish a rational faith, from the time of Origen to that of Tillotson, Dr. Clarke, and the Boyle lectures, are utterly useless. Tertullian was right when he said *Credo quia absurdum et quia impossibile est*, for there is an irreconcilable repugnancy in their natures between reason and belief; therefore, "My son, give thyself to the Lord with thy whole heart and lean not to thy own understanding."'

Such is the substance of this remarkable work. He hit, and hit very forcibly, a blot which belonged to almost all writers in common who took part in this controversy. The great deficiency of the age—a want of spiritual earnestness, an exclusive regard to the intellectual, to the ignoring of the emotional element of our nature—nowhere appears more glaringly than in the Deistical and anti-Deistical literature. What Dodwell urges in bitter irony, John Wesley urged in sober seriousness, when he intimated that Deists and evidence writers alike were strangers to those truths which are 'spiritually discerned.'

There is yet one more writer who is popularly regarded not only as a Deist, but as the chief of the Deists—Lord Bolingbroke, to whom Leland gives more space than to all the other Deists put together. So far as the eminence of the man is concerned, the prominence given to him is not disproportionate to his merits, but it is only in a very qualified sense that Lord Bolingbroke can be called a Deist. He lived and was before the public during the whole course of the Deistical controversy, so far as it belongs to the eighteenth century; but he was known, not as a theologian, but first as a brilliant, fashionable man of pleasure, then as a politician. So far as he took any part in religious matters at all, it was as a violent partisan of the established faith and as a persecutor of Dissenters. It was mainly through his instrumentality that the iniquitous Schism Act of 1713 was passed. In the House of Commons he called it 'a bill of the last importance, since it concerned the security of the Church of England, the best and firmest support of the monarchy.' In his famous letter to Sir W. Wyndham, he justified his action in regard to this measure, and the kindred bill against occasional conformity, on purely political grounds. He publicly expressed his abhorrence of the so-called Freethinkers, whom he stigmatised as 'Pests of Society.' But in a letter to Mr. Pope, he gave

some intimation of his real sentiments, and at the same time justified his reticence about them. 'Let us,' he writes, 'seek truth, but quietly, as well as freely. Let us not imagine, like some who are called Freethinkers, that every man who can think and judge for himself, as he has a right to do, has therefore a right of speaking any more than acting according to freedom of thought.' Then, after expressing sentiments which are written in the very spirit of Deism, he adds, 'I neither expect nor desire to see any public revision made of the present system of Christianity. I should fear such an attempt, &c.' It was accordingly not until after his death that his theological views were fully expressed and published. These are principally contained in his 'Philosophical Works,' which he bequeathed to David Mallet with instructions for their publication; and Mallet accordingly gave them to the world in 1754. Honest Dr. Johnson's opinion of this method of proceeding is well known. 'Sir, he was a scoundrel and a coward; a scoundrel for charging a blunderbuss against religion and morality, a coward because he had no resolution to fire it off himself, but left half-a-crown to a beggarly Scotchman to draw the trigger after his death.' This is strong language, but it is not wholly undeserved. There is something inexpressibly mean in a man countenancing the persecution of his fellow-creatures for heterodoxy, while he himself secretly held opinions more heterodox than any of those whom he helped to persecute. No doubt Bolingbroke regarded religion simply from a political point of view; it was a useful, nay, a necessary engine of Government. He, therefore, who wilfully unsettled men's minds on the subject was a bad citizen, and consequently deserving of punishment. But then, this line of argument would equally tell against the publication of unsettling opinions after his death, as against publishing them during his life-time. *Après moi le déluge*, is not an elevated maxim; yet the only other principle upon which his mode of proceeding admits of explanation is, that he wrote his last works in the spirit of a soured and disappointed man, who had been in turn the betrayer and betrayed of every party with which he had been connected.

What his motives, however, were, can only be a matter of conjecture; let us proceed to examine the opinions themselves. They are contained mainly[1] in a series of essays or letters addressed by him to his friend Pope, who did not live to read them; and they give us in a somewhat rambling, discursive fashion, his views on almost all subjects connected with religion. Many passages have the genuine Deistical ring about them.

[1] His letters on the 'Study of History' contain the same principles.

Like his precursors, he declares that he means particularly to defend the Christian religion; that genuine Christianity contained in the Gospels is the Word of God. Like them, he can scarcely find language strong enough to express his abhorrence of the Jews and the Old Testament generally. Like them, he abuses divines of all ages and their theological systems in the most unmeasured terms. It is almost needless to add that, in common with his predecessors, he contemptuously rejects all such doctrines as the Divinity of the Word, Expiation for Sin in any sense, the Holy Trinity, and the Efficacy of the Sacraments.

In many points, however, Lord Bolingbroke goes far beyond his predecessors. His 'First Philosophy' marks a distinct advance or decadence, according to the point of view from which we regard it, in the history of Freethinking. Everything in the Bible is ruthlessly swept aside, except what is contained in the Gospels. S. Paul, who had been an object of admiration to the earlier Deists, is the object of Bolingbroke's special abhorrence. And not only is the credibility of the Gospel writers impugned, Christ's own teaching and character are also carped at. Christ's conduct was 'reserved and cautious; His language mystical and parabolical. He gives no complete system of morality. His Sermon on the Mount gives some precepts which are impracticable, inconsistent with natural instinct and quite destructive of society. His miracles may be explained away.'

It may be said, indeed, that most of these tenets are contained in the germ in the writings of earlier Deists. But there are yet others of which this cannot be said.

Bolingbroke did not confine his attacks to revealed religion. Philosophy fares as badly as religion in his estimate. 'It is the frantic mother of a frantic offspring.' Plato is almost as detestable in his eyes as S. Paul. He has the most contemptuous opinion of his fellow-creatures, and declares that they are incapable of understanding the attributes of the Deity. He throws doubt upon the very existence of a world to come. He holds that 'we have not sufficient grounds to establish the doctrine of a particular providence, and to reconcile it to that of a general providence;' that 'prayer, or the abuse of prayer, carries with it ridicule;' that 'we have much better determined ideas of the divine wisdom than of the divine goodness,' and that 'to attempt to imitate God is in highest degree absurd.'

There is no need to discuss here the system of optimism which Lord Bolingbroke held in common with Lord Shaftesbury and Pope; for that system is consistent both with a belief and with a disbelief of Christianity, and we are at present concerned with Lord Bolingbroke's views only in so far as they are connected

with religion. From the extracts given above, it will be seen how far in this system Deism had drifted away from its old moorings.

After Bolingbroke no Deistical writing, properly so called, was published in England. The great controversy had died a natural death ; but there are a few apologetic works which have survived the dispute that called them forth, and may be fairly regarded as κτήματα ἐς ἀεὶ of English theology. To attempt even to enumerate the works of all the anti-Deistical writers would fill many pages. Those who are curious in such matters must be referred to the popular work of Leland, where they will find an account of the principal writers on both sides. All that can be attempted here is to notice one or two of those which are of permanent interest.

First among such is the immortal work of Bishop Butler. Wherever the English language is spoken, Butler's 'Analogy' holds a distinguished place among English classics. Published in the year 1736, when the excitement raised by 'Christianity as old as the Creation' was at its height, it was, as has been well remarked, 'the result of twenty years' study, the very twenty years during which the Deistical notions formed the atmosphere which educated people breathed.'[1] For those twenty years and longer still, the absolute certainty of God's revelation of Himself in nature, and the absolute perfection of the religion founded on that revelation, in contradistinction to the uncertainty and imperfection of all traditional religions, had been the incessant cry of the new school of thought, a cry which had lately found its strongest and ablest expression in Tindal's famous work. It was to those who raised this cry, and to those who were likely to be influenced by it, that Butler's famous argument was primarily addressed. 'You assert,' he says in effect, 'that the law of nature is absolutely perfect and absolutely certain ; I will show you that precisely the same kind of difficulties are found in nature as you find in revelation.' Butler uttered no abuse, descended to no personalities such as spoiled too many of the anti-Deistical writings ; but his book shows that his mind was positively steeped in Deistical literature. Hardly an argument which the Deists had used is unnoticed ; hardly an objection which they could raise is not anticipated. But the very circumstance which constitutes one of the chief excellences of the 'Analogy,' its freedom from polemical bitterness, has been the principal cause of its being misunderstood. To do any kind of justice to the

[1] Pattison's 'Tendencies of Religious Thought in England, 1688–1750,' in *Essays and Reviews*.

book, it must be read in the light of Deism. Had this obvious caution been always observed, such objections as those of Pitt, that 'it was a dangerous book, raising more doubts than it solves,' would never have been heard; for at the time when it was written, the doubts were everywhere current. Similar objections have been raised against the 'Analogy' in modern days, but the popular verdict will not be easily reversed.

Next in importance to Butler's 'Analogy' is a far more voluminous and pretentious work, that of Bishop Warburton on 'The Divine Legation of Moses.' It is said to have been called forth by Morgan's 'Moral Philosopher.' If so, it is somewhat curious that Warburton himself in noticing this work deprecates any answer being given to it.[1]

But, at any rate, we have Warburton's own authority for saying that his book had special reference to the Deists or Freethinkers (for the terms were then used synonymously).

He begins the dedication of the first edition of the first three books to the Freethinkers with the words, 'Gentlemen, as the following discourse was written for your use, you have the best right to this address.'

The argument of the 'Divine Legation' is stated thus by Warburton himself in syllogistic form :—

'I. Whatsoever Religion and Society have no future state for their support, must be supported by an extraordinary Providence.

'The Jewish Religion and Society had no future state for their support.

'Therefore, the Jewish Religion and Society was supported by an extraordinary Providence.

'II. It was universally believed by the ancients on their common principles of legislation and wisdom, that whatsoever Religion and Society have no future state for their support, must be supported by an extraordinary Providence.

'Moses, skilled in all that legislation and wisdom, instituted the Jewish Religion and Society without a future state for its support.

'Therefore,—Moses, who taught, believed likewise that *this*

[1] 'There is a book called *The Moral Philosopher* lately published. Is it looked into? I should hope not, merely for the sake of the taste, the sense, and learning of the present age . . . . I hope nobody will be so indiscreet as to take notice publicly of the book, though it be only in the fag end of an objection.—It is that indiscreet conduct in our defenders of religion that conveys so many worthless books from hand to hand.'—Letter to Mr. Birch in 1737. In Nichols' *Literary Illustrations of the Eighteenth Century*, ii. 70.

Religion and Society was supported by an extraordinary Providence.'

The work is a colossal monument of the author's learning and industry : the range of subjects which it embraces is enormous ; and those who cannot agree with his conclusions either on the main argument, or on the many collateral points raised, must still admire the vast research and varied knowledge which the writer displays. It is, however, a book more talked about than read at the present day. Indeed, human life is too short to enable the general reader to do more than skim cursorily over a work of such proportions. Warburton's theory was novel and startling ; and perhaps few even of the Deistical writers themselves evoked more criticism and opposition from the orthodox than this doughty champion of orthodoxy. But Warburton was in his element when engaged in controversy. He was quite ready to meet combatants from whatever side they might come ; and, wielding his bludgeon with a vigorous hand, he dealt his blows now on the orthodox, now on the heterodox, with unsparing and impartial force. Judged, however, from a literary point of view, 'The Divine Legation' is too elaborate and too discursive a work to be effective for the purpose for which it was written ; [1] and most readers will be inclined to agree with Bentley's verdict, that the writer was 'a man of monstrous appetite but bad digestion.'

Of a very different character is the next work to be noticed, as one of enduring interest on the Deistical controversy. Bishop Berkeley's 'Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher,' is one of the few exceptions to the general dreariness and unreadableness of

[1] See Charles Churchill's lines on Warburton in *The Duellist*. After much foul abuse, he thus describes *The Divine Legation*:—

> 'To make himself a man of note,
> He in defence of Scripture wrote.
> So long he wrote, and long about it,
> That e'en believers 'gan to doubt it !
> A gentleman well-bred, if breeding
> Rests in the article of reading ;
> A man of this world, for the next
> Was ne'er included in his text,' &c. &c.

Gibbon calls *The Divine Legation* 'a monument, already crumbling in the dust, of the vigour and weakness of the human mind.' See *Life of Gibbon*, ch. vii. 223, note. Bishop Lowth says of it ironically, '*The Divine Legation*, it seems, contains in it all knowledge, divine and human, ancient and modern ; it treats as of its proper subject, de omni scibili et de quolibet ente ; it is a perfect encyclopædia ; it includes in itself all history, chronology, criticism, divinity, law, politics,' &c. &c.—*A Letter to the Right Rev. Author of 'The Divine Legation,'* p. 13 (1765).

controversial writings in the dialogistic form. The elegance and easiness of his style, and the freshness and beauty of his descriptions of natural scenery by which the tedium of the controversy is relieved, render this not only a readable, but a fascinating book, even to the modern reader who has no present interest in the controversial question. It is, however, by no means free from the graver errors incident to this form of writing. Like Tindal, he makes his adversaries state their case far too weakly. But, worse than this, he puts into their mouths arguments which they would never have used, and sentiments which they never held and which could not be fairly deduced from their writings. Not that Bishop Berkeley ever wrote with conscious unfairness. The truly Christian, if somewhat eccentric character of the man forbids such a supposition for one moment. His error, no doubt, arose from the vagueness with which the terms Deist, Freethinker, Naturalist, Atheist, were used indiscriminately to stigmatise men of very different views. There was, for example, little or nothing in common between such men as Lord Shaftesbury and Mandeville. The atrocious sentiment of the 'Fable of the Bees,' that private vices are public benefits, was not the sentiment of any true Deist. Yet Shaftesbury and Mandeville are the two writers who are most constantly alluded to as representatives of one and the same system, in this dialogue. Indeed the confusion here spoken of is apparent in Berkeley's own advertisement. 'The author's design being to consider the Freethinker in the various lights of Atheist, libertine, enthusiast, scorner, critic, metaphysician, fatalist, and sceptic, it must not therefore be imagined that every one of these characters agrees with every individual Freethinker; no more being implied than that each part agrees with some or other of the sect.' The fallacy here arises from the assumption of a sect with a coherent system, which, as has been stated above, never had any existence.

The principle upon which Berkeley tells us that he constructed his dialogue is a dangerous one. 'It must not,' he writes, 'be thought that authors are misrepresented if every notion of Alciphron or Lysicles is not found precisely in them. A gentleman in private conference may be supposed to speak plainer than others write, to improve on their hints, and draw conclusions from their principles.' Yes; but this method of development, when carried out by a vehement partisan, is apt to find hints where there are no hints, and draw conclusions which are quite unwarranted by the premisses.

It is somewhat discouraging to an aspirant after literary immortality, to reflect that in spite of the enormous amount of

learned writing which the Deistical controversy elicited, many educated people who have not made the subject a special study, probably derive their knowledge of the Deists mainly from two unpretentious volumes—Leland's 'View of the Deistical Writers.'

Leland avowedly wrote as an advocate, and therefore it would be unreasonable to expect from him the measured judgment of a philosophical historian. But *as* an advocate he wrote with great fairness,—indeed, considering the excitement which the Deists raised among their contemporaries, with wonderful fairness. It is not without reason that he boasts in his preface, 'Great care has been taken to make a fair representation of them, according to the best judgment I could form of their designs.' But, besides the fact that the representations of a man who holds a brief for one side must necessarily be taken *cum grano*, Leland lived too near the time to be able to view his subject in the 'dry light' of history. 'The best book,' said Burke in 1773, 'that has ever been written against these people is that in which the author has collected in a body the whole of the Infidel code, and has brought their writings into one body to cut them all off together.' If the subject was to be dealt with in this trenchant fashion, no one could have done it more honestly than Leland has done. But the great questions which the Deists raised cannot be dealt with thus summarily. Perhaps no book professedly written 'against these people' could possibly do justice to the whole case. Hence those who virtually adopt Leland as their chief authority will at best have but a one-sided view of the matter. Leland was a Dissenter; and it may be remarked in passing, that while the National Church bore the chief part in the struggle, as it was right she should, yet many Dissenters honourably distinguished themselves in the cause of our common Christianity. The honoured names of Chandler,[1] Lardner, Doddridge, Foster,

[1] There were two anti-Deistical writers of the name of Chandler, (1) the Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, and (2) Dr. Samuel Chandler, an eminent Dissenter. Both wrote against Collins, but the latter also against Morgan and the anonymous author of the *Resurrection of Jesus considered*.

Sherlock's *Tryal of the Witnesses* ought perhaps to have been noticed as one of the works of permanent value written against the Deists. Wharton says that 'Sherlock's *Discourses on Prophecy* and *Trial of the Witnesses* are, perhaps, the best defences of Christianity in our language.' Sherlock's lawyer-like mind enabled him to manage the controversy with rare skill, but the tone of theological thought has so changed, that his once famous book is a little out of date at the present day. Judged by its intrinsic merits, William Law's answer to Tindal would also deserve to be ranked among the very best of the books which were written against the Deists; but, like almost all the works of this most able and excellent man, it has fallen into undeserved oblivion. Leslie's *Short and Easy Method with a Deist* is also admirable in its way.

Hallet, and Leland himself, to which many others might be added, may be mentioned in proof of this assertion.

The attitude towards Deism of the authors hitherto named is unmistakable. But there are yet two great names which cannot well be passed over, and which both the friends and foes of Deism have claimed for their side. These are the names of Alexander Pope and John Locke. The former was, as is well known, by profession a Roman Catholic ;[1] but in his most elaborate, if not his most successful poem, he has been supposed to express the sentiments of one, if not two, of the most sceptical of the Deistical writers. How far did the author of the 'Essay on Man' agree with the religious sentiments of his 'guide, philosopher and friend,' Viscount Bolingbroke? Pope's biographer answers this question very decisively. 'Pope,' says Ruffhead, 'permitted Bolingbroke to be considered by the public as his philosopher and guide. They agreed on the principle that "whatever is, is right," as opposed to impious complaints against Providence : but Pope meant, because we only see a part of the moral system, not the whole, therefore these irregularities serving great purposes, such as the fuller manifestation of God's goodness and justice, are right. Lord Bolingbroke's Essays are vindications of providence against the confederacy between Divines and Atheists who use a common principle, viz. that of the irregularities of God's moral government here, for different ends : the one to establish a future state, the others to discredit the being of a God.' 'Bolingbroke,' he adds, 'always tried to conceal his principles from Pope, and Pope would not credit anything against him.' Warburton's testimony is to the same effect. 'So little,' he writes, 'did Pope know of the principles of the "First Philosophy," that when a common acquaintance told him in his last illness that Lord Bolingbroke denied God's moral attributes as commonly understood, he asked Lord Bolingbroke whether he was mistaken, and was told he was.'

On the other hand, there are the letters from Bolingbroke to Pope quoted above ; there is the undoubted fact that Pope, Shaftesbury,[2] and Bolingbroke so far agreed with one another

[1] But it is no want of charity to say that his Roman Catholicism sat very lightly upon him. He himself confesses it in a letter to Atterbury.

[2] Pope was also clearly influenced by Shaftesbury's arguments that virtue was to be practised and sin avoided, not for fear of punishment or hope of reward, but for their own sakes. Witness the verse in the Universal Prayer:—

'What conscience dictates to be done,
Or warns me not to do,
This teach me *more than* hell to shun,
That *more than* heaven pursue.'

that they were all ardent disciples of the optimistic school ; and, it must be added, there is the utter absence of anything distinctively Christian in that poem in which one would naturally have expected to find it. For, to say the least of it, the 'Essay on Man' might have been written by an unbeliever, as also might the Universal Prayer. The fact seems to have been that Pope was distracted by the counter influences of two very powerful but two very opposite minds. Between Warburton and Bolingbroke, the poet might well become somewhat confused in his views. How far he would have agreed with the more pronounced anti-Christian sentiments of Bolingbroke which were addressed to him, but which never met his eye, can of course be only a matter of conjecture. It is evident that Bolingbroke himself dreaded the influence of Warburton, for he alludes constantly and almost nervously to 'the foul-mouthed critic whom I know you have at your elbow,' and anticipates objections which he suspected 'the dogmatical pedant' would raise.

However, except in so far as it is always interesting to know the attitude of any great man towards contemporary subjects of stirring interest, it is not a very important question as to what were the poet's sentiments in reference to Christianity and Deism. Pope's real greatness lay in quite another direction ; and even those who most admire the marvellous execution of his grand philosophical poem will regret that his brilliant talents were comparatively wasted on so uncongenial a subject.

Far otherwise is it with the other great name which both Deists and orthodox claim as their own. What was the relationship of John Locke, who influenced the whole tone of thought of the eighteenth century more than any other single man, to the great controversy which is the subject of these pages ? On the one hand, it is unquestionable that Locke had the closest personal connection with two of the principal Deistical writers, and that most of the rest show unmistakable signs of having studied his works and followed more or less his line of thought. Nothing can exceed the warmth of esteem and love which Locke expresses for his young friend Collins, and the touching confidence which he reposes in him.[1] Nor was it only Collins' moral worth which won Locke's admiration ; he looked upon him as belonging to the same school of intellectual thought as himself, and was of opinion that Collins would appreciate his 'Essay on the Human Understanding' better than anybody. Shaftesbury was grandson of Locke's patron and friend. Locke was tutor to his father,

[1] See Hunt's *History of Religious Thought in England*, vol. ii. p. 369, and Lechler's *Geschichte des Englischen Deismus*, p. 219.

for whom he had been commissioned to choose a wife ; and the author of 'The Characteristics' was brought up according to Locke's principles.[1] Both Toland's and Tindal's views about reason show them to have been followers of Locke's system ; while traces of Locke's influence are constantly found in Lord Bolingbroke's philosophical works. Add to all this that the progress and zenith of Deism followed in direct chronological order after the publication of Locke's two great works, and that in consequence of these works he was distinctly identified by several obscure and at least one very distinguished writer with 'the gentlemen of the new way of thinking.'

But there is another side of the picture to which we must now turn. Though Locke died before the works of his two personal friends, Collins and Shaftesbury, saw the light, Deism had already caused a great sensation before his death, and Locke has not left us in the dark as to his sentiments on the subject, so far as it had been developed in his day. Toland used several arguments from Locke's essay in support of his position that there was nothing in Christianity contrary to reason or above it. Bishop Stillingfleet, in his 'Defence of the Mysteries of the Trinity,' maintained that these arguments of Toland's were legitimate deductions from Locke's premisses. This Locke explicitly denied, and moreover disavowed any agreement with the main position of Toland in a noble passage, in which he regretted that he could not find, and feared he never should find, that perfect plainness and want of mystery in Christianity which the author maintained.[2] He also declared his implicit belief in the doctrines of revelation in the most express terms.[3]

It was not, however, his essay, but his treatise on the 'Reasonableness of Christianity,' published in 1695 (the year before the publication of Toland's famous work), which brought Locke into the most direct collision with some of the orthodox of his day. The vehement opposition which this little work aroused seems to have caused the author unfeigned surprise.—

[1] But Shaftesbury was bitterly opposed to one part of Locke's philosophy. 'He was one of the first,' writes Mr. Morell (*History of Modern Philosophy*, i. 203), 'to point out the dangerous influence which Locke's total rejection of all innate practical principles was likely to exert upon the interests of morality.' 'It was Mr. Locke,' wrote Shaftesbury, 'that struck at all fundamentals, threw all order and virtue out of the world, and made the very ideas of these (which are the same as those of God) unnatural and without foundation in our minds.' See also Bishop Fitzgerald in *Aids to Faith*.

[2] Locke's *Works*, vol. iv. p. 96.

[3] 'My lord, I read the revelation of Holy Scriptures with a full assurance that all it delivers is true.'—Locke's *Works*, vol. iv. 341.

'When it came out,' he writes, 'the buzz and flutter and noise which it made, and the reports which were raised that it subverted all morality and was designed against the Christian religion. . . . amazed me: knowing the sincerity of those thoughts which persuaded me to publish it, not without some hope of doing some service to decaying piety and mistaken and slandered Christianity.'[1] In another passage he tells us expressly that it was written against Deism. 'I was flattered to think my book might be of some use to the world; especially to those who thought either that there was no need of revelation at all, or that the revelation of Our Saviour required belief of such articles for salvation which the settled notions and their way of reasoning in some, and want of understanding in others, made impossible to them. Upon these two topics the objections seemed to turn, which were with most assurance made by Deists not against Christianity, but against Christianity misunderstood. It seemed to me, there needed no more to show the weakness of their exceptions, but to lay plainly before them the doctrines of our Saviour as delivered in the Scriptures.'[2] The truth of this is amply borne out by the contents of the book itself.

It is not, however, so much in direct statements of doctrine as in the whole tenour and frame of his spirit, that Locke differs 'in toto' from the Deists: for Locke's was essentially a pious, reverent soul. But it may be urged that all this does not really touch the point at issue. The question is, not what were Locke's personal opinions on religious matters, but what were the logical deductions from his philosophical system. It is in his philosophy, not in his theology, that Locke's reputation consists. Was then the Deistical line of argument derived from his philosophical system? and if so, was it fairly derived? The first question must be answered decidedly in the affirmative, the second not so decidedly in the negative.

That Locke would have recoiled with horror from the conclusions which the Deists drew from his premisses, and still more from the tone in which those conclusions were expressed, can scarcely be doubted. Nevertheless, the fact remains that they were so drawn. That Toland built upon his foundation, Locke himself acknowledges.[3] Traces of his influence are plainly discernible in Collins, Tindal—of whom Shaftesbury calls Locke the forerunner,—Morgan, Chubb, Bolingbroke, and Hume.

On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that the opponents of Deism built upon Locke's foundation quite as distinctly

[1] Locke's *Works*, vol. vii. p. 166.

[2] Locke's *Works*, vol. vii. p. 188, Preface to the Reader of 2nd Vindication.

[3] Locke's *Works*, vol. iv. 259, 260.

as any of the Deists did. After his death, it was soon discovered that he was a Christian. The orthodox Conybeare was not only an obvious follower of Locke, but has left on record a noble testimony to his greatness and his influence: 'In the last century there arose a very extraordinary genius for philosophical speculations; I mean Mr. Locke, the glory of that age and the instructor of the present.' Warburton was an equally enthusiastic admirer of our philosopher, and expressed his admiration in words very similar to the above.[1] Benson the Presbyterian told Lardner that he had made a pilgrimage to Locke's grave, and could hardly help crying, 'Sancte Johannes, ora pro nobis;' and innumerable other instances of the love and admiration which Christians of all kinds felt for the great philosopher might be quoted.

The question then arises, Which of the two parties, the Deists or their adversaries, were the legitimate followers of Locke? And the answer to this question is, 'Both.' The school of philosophy of which Locke was the great apostle, was the dominant school of the period. And even in the special application of his principles to religion, it would be wrong to say that either of the two parties wholly diverged from Locke's position. For the fact is, there were two sides to Locke's mind—a critical and rationalising side, and a reverent and devotional side. He must above all things demonstrate the reasonableness of the Christian religion, thereby giving the key-note to the tone of theology of the eighteenth century; but in proving this point, he is filled with a most devout and God-fearing spirit. His dislike of all obscurity, and, in consequence, his almost morbid shrinking from all systematizing and from the use of all technical terms, form his point of contact with the Deists. His strong personal faith, and his reverence for the Holy Scripture as containing a true revelation from God, bring him into harmony with the Christian advocates. No abuse on the part of the clergy, no unfair treatment, could alienate him from Christianity. One cannot help speculating how he would have borne himself had he lived to see the later development of Deism. Perhaps his influence would have had a beneficial effect upon both sides; but, in whatever period his lot had been cast, it is difficult to conceive Locke in any other light than that of a sincere and devout Christian.[2]

[1] 'Mr. Locke, the honour of this age and the instructor of the future' . . . . 'That great philosopher' . . . . 'It was Mr. Locke's love of it [Christianity] that seems principally to have exposed him to his pupil's [Lord Shaftesbury's] bitterest insults.'—Dedication of *The Divine Legation* (first three books) to the Freethinkers.

[2] It is, however, not improbable that Locke contributed to some extent

It remains for us to consider what were the effects of the Deistical movement.

The early period of the eighteenth century was a period of controversy of all kinds, and of controversy carried on in a bitter and unchristian spirit; and of all the controversies which arose, none was conducted with greater bitterness than the Deistical.[1] The Deists must bear the blame of setting the example. Their violent abuse of the Church, their unfounded assertions that the clergy did not really believe what they preached, that the Christian religion as taught by them was a mere invention of priestcraft to serve its own ends, their overweening pretensions contrasted with the scanty contributions which they actually made either to theology or to philosophy or to philology,—all this was sufficiently provoking.[2]

But the Christian advocates fell into a sad mistake when they fought against them with their own weapons. Without attempting nicely to adjust the degree of blame attributable to either party in this unseemly dispute, we may easily see that this was one evil effect of the Deistical controversy, that it generated on both sides a spirit of rancour and scurrility.

Again, the Deists contributed in some degree, though not intentionally, towards encouraging the low tone of morals which is admitted on all sides to have been prevalent during the first half of the eighteenth century. It was constantly insinuated that the Deists themselves were men of immoral lives. This may have been true of individual Deists, but it requires more

to foster that dry, hard, unpoetical spirit which characterised both the Deistical and anti-Deistical literature, and, indeed, the whole religion in the eighteenth century. 'His philosophy,' it has been said, 'smells of the candle, rarely.' 'It is curious,' wrote Mr Rogers (*Essays*, vol. iii. p. 104, 'John Locke,' &c.) 'that there is hardly a passing remark in all Locke's great work on any of the aesthetical or emotional characteristics of humanity; so that, for anything that appears there, men might have nothing of the kind in their composition. Of all the virtues of the Beautiful he seems to have been almost insensible.' The same want in the followers of Locke's system, both orthodox and unorthodox, is painfully conspicuous. And again, as Dr Whewell remarks (*History of Moral Philosophy*, Lecture v. p. 74), 'the primal axiom of Locke's philosophy was felt as a vast accession of strength by the lower, and a great addition to the difficulty of their task by the higher school of morality.' The Lower or utilitarian school of morality, which held that morals are to be judged solely by their consequences, was largely followed in the eighteenth century, and contributed not a little to the low moral and spiritual tone of the period.

[1] The Calvinistic controversy was more bitter, but it belonged to the second, not the first half of the century.

[2] 'They attacked a scientific problem without science, and an historical problem without history.' Mr J. C. Morison's Review of Leslie Stephen's 'History of English Thought' in *Macmillan's Magazine* for February 1877.

proof than has been given, before so grave an accusation can be admitted against them as a body.

But if the restrictions which Christianity imposes were not the real objections to it in the minds of the Deistical writers, at any rate their writings, or rather perhaps hazy notions of those writings picked up at second-hand, were seized upon by others who were glad of any excuse for throwing off the checks of religion.[1] The immorality of the age may be more fairly said to have been connected with the Deistical controversy than with the Deists themselves. It is not to be supposed that the fine gentlemen of the coffee-houses troubled themselves to read Collins or Bentley, Tindal or Conybeare. They only heard vague rumours that the truths, and consequently the obligations of Christianity were impugned, and that, by the admission of Christian advocates themselves, unbelief was making great progress. The *roués* were only Freethinkers in the sense that Squire Thornhill in the 'Vicar of Wakefield' was.

Another ill effect was, that it took away the clergy from a very important part of their practical work. There was something much more attractive to a clergyman in immortalising his name by annihilating an enemy of the Faith, than in the ordinary routine of parochial work.

Not, however, that the clergy as a rule made Deism a stepping-stone to preferment. It would be difficult to point to a single clergyman who was advanced to any high post in the Church in virtue of his services against Deism, who would not have equally deserved and in all probability obtained preferment, had his talents been exerted in another direction. The talents of such men as Butler, Warburton, Waterland, Gibson, Sherlock, Bentley, and Berkeley would have shed a lustre upon any profession. But none the less is it true that the Deistical controversy diverted attention from other and no less important matters; and hence, indirectly, Deism was to a great extent the cause of that low standard of spiritual life which might have been elevated, had the clergy paid more attention to their flocks, and less to their literary adversaries.

The effects, however, of the great controversy were not all evil. If such sentiments as those to which the Deists gave utterance were floating in men's minds, it was well that they should find expression. A state of smouldering scepticism is always a dangerous state. Whatever the doubts and difficulties

[1] See Bishop Butler's charge to the clergy of Durham, 1751.—'A great source of infidelity plainly is, the endeavour to get rid of religious restraints.'

might be, it was well that they should be brought into the full light of day.

Moreover, if the Deists did no other good, they at least brought out the full strength of the Christian cause, which otherwise might have lain dormant. Although much of the anti-Deistical literature perished with the occasion which called it forth, there is yet a residuum which will be immortal.

Again, the free discussion of such questions as the Deists raised, led to an ampler and nobler conception of Christianity than might otherwise have been gained. For there was a certain element of truth in most of the Deistical writings. If Toland failed to prove that there were no mysteries in Christianity, yet perhaps he set men a-thinking that there was a real danger of darkening counsel by words without knowledge, through the indiscriminate use of scholastic jargon. If Collins confounded freethinking with thinking in his own particular way, he yet drew out from his opponents a more distinct admission of the right of freethinking in the proper sense of the term than might otherwise have been made. If Shaftesbury made too light of the rewards which the righteous may look for, and the punishments which the wicked have to fear, he at least helped, though unintentionally, to vindicate Christianity from the charge of self-seeking, and to place morality upon its proper basis. If Tindal attributed an unorthodox sense to the assertion that 'Christianity was as old as the Creation,' he brought out more distinctly an admission that there was an aspect in which it is undoubtedly true.

One of the most striking features of this strange controversy was its sudden collapse about the middle of the century. The whole interest in the subject seems to have died away as suddenly as it arose fifty years before. This change of feeling is strikingly illustrated by the flatness of the reception given by the public to Bolingbroke's posthumous works in 1754. For though few persons will be inclined to agree with Horace Walpole's opinion that Bolingbroke's 'metaphysical divinity was the best of his writings,' yet the eminence of the writer, the purity and piquancy of his style, the real and extensive learning which he displayed, would, one might have imagined, have awakened a far greater interest in his writings than was actually shown. Very few replies were written to this, the last, and in some respects, the most important—certainly the most elaborate attack that ever was made upon popular Christianity from the Deistical standpoint. The 'five pompous quartos' of the great statesman attracted infinitely less attention than the slight, fragmentary treatise of an obscure Irishman had done fifty-eight years before.

And after Bolingbroke not a single writer who can properly be called a Deist appeared in England.

How are we to account for this strange revulsion of feeling, or rather this marvellous change from excitement to apathy? One modern writer imputes it to the inherent dulness of the Deists themselves;[1] another to their utter defeat by the Christian apologists.[2] No doubt there is force in both these reasons, but there were other causes at work which contributed to the result.

One seems to have been the vagueness and unsatisfactoriness of the constructive part of the Deists' work. They set themselves with vigour to the work of destruction, but when this was completed—what next? The religion which was to take the place of popular Christianity was at best a singularly vague and intangible sort of thing. 'You are to follow nature, and that will teach you what true Christianity is. If the facts of the Bible don't agree, so much the worse for the facts.' There was an inherent untenableness in this position.[3] Having gone thus far, thoughtful men could not stand still. They must go on further or else turn back. Some went forward in the direction of Hume, and found themselves stranded in the dreary waste of pure scepticism, which was something very different from genuine Deism. Others went backwards and determined to stand upon the old ways, since no firm footing was given them on the new. There was a want of any definite scheme or unanimity of opinion on the part of the Deists. Collins boasted of the rise and growth of a new sect. But, as Dr. Monk justly observes, 'the assumption of a growing sect implies an uniformity of opinions which did not really exist among the impugners of Christianity.'[4]

The independence of the Deists in relation to one another might render it difficult to confute any particular tenet of the sect, for the simple reason that there *was* no sect; but this same

[1] Mr. Leslie Stephen, *Essays on Freethinking and Plain Speaking*. On Shaftesbury's 'Characteristics.'—'The Deists were not only pilloried for their heterodoxy, but branded with the fatal inscription of "dulness."' This view is amplified in his larger work, published since the above was written.

[2] *Aids to Faith*, p. 44.

[3] In a brilliant review of Mr. Leslie Stephen's work in *Macmillan's Magazine*, February 1877, Mr. James Cotter Morison remarks on the Deists' view that natural religion must be always alike plain and perspicuous, 'against this convenient opinion the only objection was that it contradicted the total experience of the human race.'

[4] Monk's *Life of Bentley*, vol. i. See also Berkeley's *Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher*, 107.

independence prevented them from making the impression upon the public mind which a compact phalanx might have done. The Deists were a company of Free Lances rather than a regular army, and effected no more than such irregular forces usually do.

And here arises the question, What real hold had Deism upon the public mind at all? There is abundance of contemporary evidence which would lead us to believe that the majority of the nation were fast becoming unchristianised. Bishop Butler was not the man to make a statement, and especially a statement of such grave import, lightly, and his account of the state of religion is melancholy indeed. 'It is come,' he writes, 'I know not how, to be taken for granted, by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly, they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment, and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world.'[1] Archbishop Wake's testimony is equally explicit,[2] so is Bishop Warburton's, so is Dean Swift's. Voltaire declared that there was only just enough religion left in England to distinguish Tories who had little from Whigs who had less.

In the face of such testimony it seems a bold thing to assert that there was a vast amount of noise and bluster which caused a temporary panic, but little else, and that after all Hurd's view of the matter was nearer the truth. 'The truth of the case,' he writes, 'is no more than this. A few fashionable men make a noise in the world; and this clamour being echoed on all sides from the shallow circles of their admirers, misleads the unwary into an opinion that the irreligious spirit is universal and uncontrollable.' A strong proof of the absence of any real sympathy with the Deists is afforded by the violent outcry which was raised against them on all sides. This outcry was not confined

[1] Advertisement to the first edition of *The Analogy*, p. xiv. See also Swift's description of the Duchess of Marlborough, in *Last Four Years of Queen Anne*, bk. i. The first and most prominent subject of Bishop Butler's 'Durham Charge,' is 'the general decay of religion,' 'which,' he says, 'is now observed by everyone, and has been for some time the complaint of all serious persons' (written in 1751). The Bishop then instructs his clergy at length how this sad fact is to be dealt with; in fact this, directly or indirectly, is the topic of the whole Charge.

[2] He wrote to Courayer in 1726,—'No care is wanting in our clergy to defend the Christian Faith against all assaults, and I believe no age or nation has produced more or better writings, &c. . . . This is all we can do. Iniquity in practice, God knows, abounds,' &c.

to any one class or party either in the political or religious world. We may not be surprised to find Warburton mildly suggesting that 'he would hunt down that pestilent herd of libertine scribblers with which the island is overrun, as good King Edgar did his wolves,'[1] or Berkeley, that 'if ever man deserved to be denied the common benefits of bread and water, it was the author of a Discourse of Freethinking,'[2] and that 'he should omit no endeavour to render the persons (of Freethinkers) as despicable and their practice as odious in the eye of the world as they deserve.'[3] But we find almost as truculent notions in writings where we might least expect them. It was, for example, a favourite accusation of the Tories against the Whigs that they favoured the Deists. 'We' (Tories), writes Swift, 'accuse them [the Whigs] of the public encouragement and patronage to Tindal, Toland, and other atheistical writers.'[4] And yet we find the gentle Addison, Whig as he was, suggesting in the most popular of periodicals, corporal punishment as a suitable one for the Freethinker;[5] Steele, a Whig and the most merciful of men, advocating in yet stronger terms a similar mode of treatment;[6] Fielding, a Whig and not a particularly straitlaced man, equally violent.[7]

This strong feeling against the Deists is all the more remarkable when we remember that it existed at a time of great religious apathy, and at a time when illiberality was far from being a besetting fault. The dominant party in the Church was that which would now be called the Broad Church party, and among the Dissenters at least equal latitudinarianism was tolerated. This, however, which might seem at first sight a reason why Deism should have been winked at, was probably in reality one of the causes why it was so unpopular. The nation had begun to be weary of controversy; in the religious as in the political world, there was arising a disposition not to disturb the prevailing quiet. The Deist was the *enfant terrible* of the period, who would persist in raising questions which men were not inclined to meddle with. It was therefore necessary to snub him; and accordingly snubbed he was most effectually.

The Deists themselves appear to have been fully aware of the unpopularity of their speculations. They have been accused, and not without reason, of insinuating doubts which they dared

[1] Watson's *Life of Warburton*, p. 293.
[2] *Guardian*, No. 3.
[3] *Guardian*. No. 88.
[4] *Examiner*, xxxix. See also Charles Leslie's *Theological Works*, vol. ii. p. 533.
[5] *Tatler*, No. 108.
[6] *Tatler*, No. 137.
[7] See *Amelia*, bk. i. ch. iii. &c.

not express openly. But then, why dared they not express them? The days of persecution for the expression of opinion were virtually ended. There were indeed laws still unrepealed against blasphemy and contempt of religion, but except in extreme cases (such as those of Woolston and Annet), they were no longer put into force. Warburton wrote no more than the truth when he addressed the Freethinkers thus: 'This liberty may you long possess and gratefully acknowledge. I say this because one cannot but observe that amidst full possession of it, you continue with the meanest affectation to fill your prefaces with repeated clamours against difficulties and discouragements attending the exercise of freethinking. There was a time, and that within our own memories, when such complaints were seasonable and useful; but happy for you, gentlemen, you have outlived it.'[1] They had outlived it, that is to say, so far as legal restrictions were concerned. If they did meet with 'difficulties and discouragements,' they were simply those which arose from the force of public opinion being against them. But be the cause what it may, the result is unquestionable. 'The English Deists wrote and taught their creed in vain; they were despised while living, and consigned to oblivion when dead; and they left the Church of England unhurt by the struggle.'[2] It was in France and Germany, not in England that the movement set on foot by the English Deists made a real and permanent impression.

J. H. O.

CHAPTER IV.

LATITUDINARIAN CHURCHMANSHIP.

(1) CHARACTER AND INFLUENCE OF ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON'S THEOLOGY.

'LATITUDINARIAN' is not so neutral a term as could be desired. It conveys an implication of reproach and suspicion, by no means ungrounded in some instances, but very inappropriate when used of men who must count among the most distinguished ornaments of the English Church. But no better title suggests itself. The eminent prelates who were raised to the bench in King William III.'s time can no longer, without ambiguity, be called

[1] Dedication of first three books of the *Divine Lejation*. See also Pattison's Essay in *Essays and Reviews*.

[2] Farrar's *Bampton Lectures*, 'History of Free Thought.'

'Low Churchmen,' because the Evangelicals who succeeded to the name belong to a wholly different school of thought from the Low Churchmen of an earlier age; nor 'Whigs,' because that sobriquet has long been confined to politics; nor 'Broad Churchmen,' because the term would be apt to convey a set of ideas belonging to the nineteenth more than to the eighteenth century. It only remains to divest the word as far as possible of its polemical associations, and to use it as denoting what some would call breadth, others Latitudinarianism of religious and ecclesiastical opinion.

There were many faulty elements in the Latitudinarianism of the eighteenth century. Those who dreaded and lamented its advances found it no difficult task to show that sometimes it was connected with Deistical or with Socinian or Arian views, sometimes with a visionary enthusiasm, sometimes with a weak and nerveless religion of sentiment. They could point also to the obvious fact that thorough scepticism, or even mere irreligion, often found a decent veil under plausible professions of a libera Christianity. There were some, indeed, who, in the excitement of hostility or alarm, seemed to lose all power of ordinary discrimination. Much in the same way as every 'freethinker' was set down as a libertine or an atheist, so also many men of undoubted piety and earnestness who had done distinguished services in the Christian cause, and who had greatly contributed to raise the repute of the English Church, were constantly ranked as Latitudinarians in one promiscuous class with men to whose principles they were utterly opposed. But, after making all allowance for the unfortunate confusion thus attached to the term, the fact remains that the alarm was not unfounded. Undoubtedly a lower form of Latitudinarianism gained ground, very deficient in some important respects. Just in the same way as, before the middle of the century, a sort of spiritual inertness had enfeebled the vigour of High Churchmen on the one hand and of Nonconformists on the other, so also it was with the Latitude men. After the first ten or fifteen years of the century the Broad Church party in the Church of England was in no very satisfactory state. It had lost not only in spirit and energy, but also in earnestness and piety. Hoadly, Herring, Watson, Blackburne, all showed the characteristic defect of their age—a want of spiritual depth and fervour. They needed a higher elevation of motive and of purpose to be such leaders as could be desired of what was in reality a great religious movement.

For, whatever may have been its deficiencies, there was no religious movement of such lasting importance as that which

from the latter part of the seventeenth until near the end of the eighteenth century was being carried on under the opprobrium of Latitudinarianism. The Methodist and Evangelical revival had, doubtless, greater visible and immediate consequences. Much in the same way, some of the widespread monastic revivals of the Middle Ages were more visible witnesses to the power of religion, and more immediately conducive to its interests, than the silent current of theological thought which was gradually preparing the way for the Reformation. But it was these latter influences which, in the end, have taken the larger place in the general history of Christianity. The Latitudinarianism which had already set in before the Revolution of 1688, unsatisfactory as it was in many respects, probably did more than any other agency in directing and gradually developing the general course of religious thought. Its importance may be intimated in this, that of all the questions in which it was chiefly interested there is scarcely one which has not started into fresh life in our own days, and which is not likely to gain increasing significance as time advances. Church history in the seventeenth century had been most nearly connected with that of the preceding age; it was still directly occupied with the struggles and contentions which had been aroused by the Reformation. That of the eighteenth century is more nearly related to the period which succeeded it. In the sluggish calm that followed the abatement of old controversies men's minds reverted anew to the wide general principles on which the Reformation had been based, and, with the loss of power which attends uncertainty, were making tentative efforts to improve and strengthen the superstructure. 'Intensity,' as has been remarked, 'had for a time done its work, and was now giving place to breadth; when breadth should be natural, intensity might come again.'[1] The Latitude men of the last age can only be fairly judged in the light of this. Their immediate plans ended for the most part in disappointing failure. It was perhaps well that they did, as some indeed of the most active promoters of them were fain to acknowledge. Their proposed measures of comprehension, of revision, of reform, were often defective in principle, and in some respects as one-sided as the evils they were intended to cure. But if their ideas were not properly matured, or if the time was not properly matured for them, they at all events contained the germs of much which may be realised in the future. Meanwhile the comprehensive spirit which is absolutely essential in a national Church was kept alive. The Church of England would have fallen, or would have

[1] H. S. Skeats, *History of the Free Churches*, 315.

deserved to fall, if a narrow exclusiveness had gained ground in it without check or protest.

It is proposed to invite, in this chapter, a more particular attention to the writings of Archbishop Tillotson. He lived and died in the seventeenth century, but is an essential part of the Church history of the eighteenth. The most general sketch of its characteristics would be imperfect without some reference to the influence which his life and teaching exercised upon it. Hallam contrasts the great popularity of his sermons for half a century with the utter neglect into which they have now fallen, as a remarkable instance of the fickleness of religious taste.[1] Something must certainly be attributed to change of taste. If Tillotson were thoroughly in accord with our own age in thought and feeling, the mere difference of his style from that which pleases the modern ear would prevent his having many readers. He is reckoned diffuse and languid, greatly deficient in vigour and vivacity. How different was the tone of criticism in the last age! Dryden considered that he was indebted for his good style to the study of Tillotson's sermons.[2] Robert Nelson spoke of them as the best standard of the English language.[3] Addison expressed the same opinion, and thought his writing would form a proper groundwork for the dictionary which he once thought of compiling.[4]

But it was not the beauty and eloquence of language with which Tillotson was at one time credited that gave him the immense repute with which his name was surrounded; neither is it a mere change of literary taste that makes a modern reader disinclined to admire, or even fairly to appreciate, his sermons. He struck the key-note which in his own day, and for two generations or more afterwards, governed the predominant tone of religious reasoning and sentiment. In the substance no less than in the form of his writings men found exactly what suited them—their own thoughts raised to a somewhat higher level, and expressed just in the manner which they would most aspire to imitate. His sermons, when delivered, had been exceedingly popular. We are told of the crowds of auditors and the fixed attention with which they listened, also of the number of clergymen who frequented his St. Laurence lectures, not only for the pleasure of hearing, but to form their minds and improve their style. He was, in fact, the great preacher of his time. Horace Walpole, writing in 1742, compared the throngs who flocked to hear Whitefield to the concourse which used to gather when

[1] H. Hallam, *Literature of Europe*, iv. 177.
[2] *Life of Tillotson*, T. Birch, ccxxxv.
[3] Letter to G. Hanger, in Nichols' *Lit. An.*, iv. 215. [4] Birch, ccxxxv.

Tillotson preached.[1] The literature of the eighteenth century abounds in expressions of respect for his character and admiration of his sermons. Samuel Wesley said that he had brought the art of preaching 'near perfection, had there been as much of life as there is of politeness and generally of cool, clear, close reasoning and convincing arguments.'[2] Even John Wesley puts him in the very foremost rank of great preachers.[3] Robert Nelson specially recommended his sermons to his nephew 'for true notions of religion.'[4] 'I like,' remarked Sir Robert Howard, 'such sermons as Dr. Tillotson's, where all are taught a plain and certain way of salvation, and with all the charms of a calm and blessed temper and of pure reason are excited to the uncontroverted, indubitable duties of religion; where all are plainly shown that the means to obtain the eternal place of happy rest are those, and no other, which also give peace in the present life; and where everyone is encouraged and exhorted to learn, but withal to use his own care and reason in working out his own salvation.'[5] Bishop Fleetwood exclaims of him that 'his name will live for ever, increasing in honour with all good and wise men.'[6] Locke called him 'that ornament of our Church, that every way eminent prelate.' In the 'Spectator' his sermons are among Sir Roger de Coverley's favourites.[7] In the 'Guardian'[8] Addison tells how 'the excellent lady, the Lady Lizard, in the space of one summer furnished a gallery with chairs and couches of her own and her daughter's working, and at the same time heard Dr. Tillotson's sermons twice over.' In the 'Tatler' he is spoken of as 'the most eminent and useful author of his age.'[9] His sermons were translated into Dutch, twice into French, and many of them into German. Even in the last few years of the eighteenth century we find references to his 'splendid talents.'[10]

But, as a rule, the writers of the eighteenth century seem unable to form anything like a calm estimate of the eminent bishop. Many were lavish in their encomiums; a minority were extravagant in censures and expressions of dislike. His gentle and temperate disposition had not saved him from bitter invec-

[1] *Letters*, ed. Berry, ii. 181.
[2] Birch, cccxxxviii.
[3] J. Wesley, *Works*, x. 299.
[4] Nichols, iv. 215.
[5] Sir R. Howard, *History of Religion*, 1694, preface.
[6] Fleetwood's *Works*, 516.
[7] No. 106.
[8] No. 155.
[9] No. 101. In the *Whig Examiner* (No. 2) it is observed, as an instance of the singular variety of tastes, that 'Bunyan and Quarles have passed through several editions, and please as many readers as Dryden and Tillotson.'
[10] *Reflections on the Clergy*, &c., 1798, iv.; J. Napleton's *Advice to a Student*, 1795, 26.

tives in his lifetime, which did not cease after his death. He was set down by his opponents as 'a freethinker.' In the violent polemics of Queen Anne's reign this was a charge very easily incurred, and, once incurred, carried with it very grave implications. By what was apt to seem a very natural sequence Dean Hickes called the good primate in downright terms an atheist.[1] Charles Leslie speaks of him as 'that unhappy man,'[2] and said he was 'owned by the atheistical wits of all England as their primate and apostle.'[3] Of course opinions thus promulgated by the leaders of a party descended with still further distortion to more ignorant partisans. Tom Tempest in the 'Idler' believes that King William burned Whitehall that he might steal the furniture, and that Tillotson died an atheist.[4] John Wesley, as has been already observed, held the Archbishop in much respect. He was too well read a man to listen to misrepresentations on such a matter, too broad and liberal in his views to be scared at the name of Latitudinarian, too deeply impressed with the supreme importance of Christian morality to judge anyone harshly for preaching 'virtue' to excess. But Whitefield and Seward were surpassed by none in the unsparing nature of their attack on Tillotson, 'that traitor who sold his Lord.'[5] It is fair to add that later in life Whitefield regretted the use of such terms, and owned that 'his treatment of him had been far too severe.'[6] With many of the Evangelicals Tillotson was in great disfavour. It is not a little remarkable that a divine who had been constantly extolled as a very pattern of Christian piety and Christian wisdom should by them be systematically decried as little better than a heathen moralist.

The foregoing instances may serve to illustrate the important place which Tillotson held in the religious history of the eighteenth century. They may suffice to show that while there was an extraordinary diversity of opinion as to the character of the influence he had exercised—while some loved and admired him and others could scarcely tolerate the mention of him—all agreed that his life and writings had been a very important element in directing the religious thought of his own and the succeeding age. His opponents were very willing to acknowledge that he was greatly respected by Nonconformists. Why not? said they, when he and his party are half Presbyterians, and would 'bring the Church into the Conventicle or the Conventicle into the

[1] Swift's *Works*, viii. 196.
[2] C. Leslie's *Works*, ii. 543.
[3] Id. ii. 596.
[4] No. 10.
[5] Lavington's *Enthusiasm of Meth. and Pap.*, &c., 11, and Polwhele's Introduction to id. ccxxxii.
[6] *Qu. Rev.*, 31, 121.

Church.'[1] They allowed still more readily that he was constantly praised by Rationalists and Deists. Collins put a formidable weapon into their hands when he called Tillotson 'the head of all freethinkers.'[2] But they also had to own that in authority as well as in station he had been eminently a leader in the English Church. A majority of the bishops, and many of the most distinguished among them, had followed his lead. The great bulk of the laity had honoured him in his lifetime, and continued to revere his memory. Men like Locke, and Somers, and Addison were loud in his praise. Even those who were accustomed to regard the Low Churchmen of their age as 'amphibious trimmers' or 'Latitudinarian traditors' were by no means unanimous in dispraise of Tillotson. Dodwell had spoken of him with esteem; and Robert Nelson, who was keenly alive to 'the infection of Latitudinarian teaching,' not only maintained a lifelong friendship with him, and watched by him at his death, but also, as was before mentioned, referred to his sermons for sound notions of religion.

A study of Tillotson's writings ought to throw light upon the general tendency of religious thought which prevailed in England during the half-century or more through which their popularity lasted; for there can be no doubt that his influence was not of a kind which depends on great personal qualities. He was a man who well deserved to be highly esteemed by all with whom he came in contact. But in his gentle and moderate disposition there was none of the force and fire which compels thought into new channels, and sways the minds of men even against their will. With sound practical sense, with pure, unaffected piety, and in unadorned but persuasive language, he simply gave utterance to religious ideas in a form which to a wide extent satisfied the reason and came home to the conscience of his age. Those, on the other hand, who most distrusted the direction which such ideas were taking, held in proportionate aversion the primate who had been so eminent a representative of them.

Tillotson was universally regarded both by friends and foes as 'a Latitude man.' His writings, therefore, may well serve to exemplify the moderate Latitudinarianism of a thoughtful and religious English Churchman at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Perhaps the first thing that will strike a reader of his works is the constant appeal on all matters of religion to reason. That Christianity is 'the best and the holiest, the wisest and the most reasonable religion in the world;'[3] that 'all the precepts of it

[1] Sacheverell, Nov. 5, Sermon 'On False Brethren.' [2] Birch, ccxxxiii.
[3] Serm. v., *Works*, i. 465.

are reasonable and wise, requiring such duties of us as are suitable to the light of nature, and do approve themselves to the best reason of mankind'[1] -such is the general purport of the arguments by which he most trusts to persuade the heart and the understanding. And how, on the other hand, could he better meet the infidelity of the age than by setting himself 'to show the unreasonableness of atheism and of scoffing at religion?' If the appeal to reason will not persuade, what will?

The primary and sovereign place assigned to reason in Tillotson's conception of man as a being able to know and serve God involved some consequences which must be mentioned separately, though they are closely connected with one another.

It led him, if not to reject, at all events to regard with profound distrust all assumptions of any gift of spiritual discernment distinguishable from ordinary powers of understanding. Tillotson's view was that the Spirit of God enlightens the human mind only through the reason, so that the faith of Abraham, for example, 'was the result of the wisest reasoning.'[2] He allows that the spiritual presence may act upon the reason by raising and strengthening the faculty, by making clear the object of inquiry, by suggesting arguments, by holding minds intent upon the evidence, by removing the impediments which hinder assent, and especially by making the persuasion of a truth effectual on the life.[3] This, however, is the very utmost that Tillotson could concede to those who dwell upon the presence within the soul of an inward spiritual light.

Tillotson gave great offence to some of his contemporaries by some expressions he has used in relation to the degree of assurance which is possible to man in regard of religious truths. He based all assent upon rational evidence. But he unhesitatingly admitted that mathematics only admit of clear demonstration; in other matters proof consists in the best arguments that the quality and nature of the thing will bear. We may be well content, he said, with a well-grounded confidence on matters of religious truth corresponding to that which is abundantly sufficient for our purposes in the conduct of our most important worldly interests. A charge was thereupon brought against him of authorising doubt and opening a door to the most radical disbelief. The attack scarcely deserved Tillotson's somewhat lengthy defence. He had but re-stated what many before him had observed as to the exceptional character of demonstrative evidence, and the folly of expecting it where it is plainly inapplicable. A religious mind,

[1] Id. i. 448.
[2] S. lvi., *Works*, iv. 35.
[3] S. ccxxii., *Works*, ix. 249.

itself thoroughly convinced, may chafe against possibility of doubt, but may as well complain against the conditions of human nature. Yet the controversy on this point between Tillotson and his opponents is instructive in forming a judgment upon the general character of religious thought in that age. Tillotson appears, on the one hand, to have been somewhat over-cautious in disclaiming the alleged consequences of his denial of absolute religious certainty. He allows the theoretical possibility of doubt, but speaks as if it were essentially unreasonable. He shows no sign of recognising the sincere faith that often underlies it; that prayerful doubt may be in itself a kind of prayer; that its possibility is involved in all inquiry; that there is such a thing as an irreligious stifling of doubt, resulting in a spiritual and moral degradation; that doubt may sometimes be the clear work of the Spirit of God to break down pride and self-sufficiency, to force us to realise what we believe, to quicken our sense of truth, and to bid us chiefly rest our faith on personal and spiritual grounds which no doubts can touch. In this Tillotson shared in what must be considered a grave error of his age. Few things so encouraged the growth of Deism and unbelief as the stiff refusal on the part of the defenders of Christianity to admit of a frequently religious element in doubt. There was a general disposition, in which even such men as Bishop Berkeley shared, to relegate all doubters to the class of Deists and 'Atheists.' Tillotson strove practically against this fatal tendency, but his reasonings on the subject were confused. He earned, more perhaps than any other divine of his age, the love and confidence of many who were perplexed with religious questionings; but his arguments had not the weight which they would have gained if he had acknowledged more ungrudgingly that doubt must not always be regarded as either a folly or a sin.

Tillotson had learnt much from the Puritan and Calvinistic teaching which, instilled into him throughout his earlier years, had laid deep the foundations of the serious and fervent vein of piety conspicuous in all his life and writings. He had learnt much from the sublime Christian philosophy of his eminent instructors at Cambridge, Cudworth and Henry More, John Smith and Whichcote, under whom his heart and intellect had attained a far wider reach than they could ever have gained in the school of Calvin. But his influence in the eighteenth century would have been more entirely beneficial, if he had treasured up from his Puritan remembrances clearer perceptions of the searching power of divine grace; or if he had not only learnt from the Platonists to extol 'that special prerogative of Christianity that

it dares appeal to reason,'[1] and to be imbued with a sense of the divine immutability of moral principles, but had also retained their convictions of unity with the Divine nature, implied alike in that eternity of morality and in that supremacy of the rational faculties, —together with a corresponding belief that there may be intimate communion between the spirit of man and his Maker, and that 'they who make reason the light of heaven and the very oracle of God, must consider that the oracle of God is not to be heard but in His holy temple,' that is to say, in the heart of a good man purged by that indwelling Spirit.[2] Considering the immense influence which Tillotson's Cambridge teachers had upon the development of his mind, it is curious how widely he differs from them in inward tone. It is quite impossible to conceive of their dwelling, as he and his followers did, upon the pre-eminent importance of the external evidences.

Tillotson could not adopt as unreservedly as he did his pervading tenet of the reasonableness of Christianity without yielding to reason all the rights due to an unquestioned leader. Like Henry More, he would have wished to take for a motto 'that generous resolution of Marcus Cicero,—rationem, quo ea me cunque ducet, sequar.'[3] 'Doctrines,' he said, 'are vehemently to be suspected which decline trial. To deny liberty of inquiry and judgment in matters of religion, is the greatest injury and disparagement to truth that can be, and a tacit acknowledgment that she lies under some disadvantage, and that there is less to be said for her than for error.'[4] 'Tis only things false and adulterate which shun the light and fear the touchstone.' He has left a beautiful prayer which his editor believed he was in the habit of using before he composed a sermon. In it he asks to be made impartial in his inquiry after truth, ready always to receive it in love, to practise it in his life, and to continue steadfast in it to the end. He adds, 'I perfectly resign myself, O Lord, to Thy counsel and direction, in confidence that Thy goodness is such, that Thou wilt not suffer those who sincerely desire to know the truth and rely upon Thy guidance, finally to miscarry.'[5]

These last words are a key to Tillotson's opinion upon a question about which, in the earlier part of the eighteenth century, there was much animated controversy—in what light sincere error should be regarded. If free inquiry on religious subjects is allowable and right, is a man to be held blameless if he arrives at false conclusions in respect of the fundamental articles of faith? That the answer to be given might involve

[1] H. More, Gen. Pref. § 3. [2] Id. § 6. [3] Id. § 3.
[4] S. xx., *Works*, ii. 277. [5] *Works*, x. 199.

grave issues continually appeared in discussion alike with Roman Catholics and with Deists. The former had no stronger argument against liberty of private judgment than to ask how those who freely granted it could pass any moral censure upon the heresies which might constantly result from it. The latter insisted that, whether they were right or wrong, no Protestant had any title to hold them in the slightest degree blameable before God or man for any opinions which were the result of conscientious research. Much was written on the subject by theologians of the generation which succeeded next after Tillotson, as for instance by Hoadly, Sykes, Whitby, Law, Hare, and Balguy. But in truth, if the premisses be granted—if free inquiry is allowable and the inquiry be conducted with all honesty of heart and mind—no candid person, whatever be his opinions, can give other than one answer. Kettlewell, High Churchman and Nonjuror, readily acknowledged that 'where our ignorance of any of Christ's laws is joined with an honest heart, and remains after our sincere industry to know the truth, we may take comfort to ourselves that it is involuntary and innocent.'[1] In this he agreed with his Low Church contemporary, Chillingworth, who said that 'To ask pardon of simple and involuntary errors is tacitly to imply that God is angry with us for them, and that were to impute to Him this strange tyranny of requiring brick where He gives no straw; of expecting to gather where He strewed not; of being offended with us for not doing what He knows we cannot do.'[2] Tillotson always speaks guardedly on the subject. He was keenly alive to the evil practical consequences which may result from intellectual error,—very confident that in all important particulars orthodox doctrine was the true and safe path, very anxious therefore not to say anything which might weaken the sense of responsibility in those who deviated from it. But he never attempted to evade the logical conclusion which follows from an acknowledged right of private judgment. In his practice as well as in his theory, he wholly admitted the blamelessness of error where there was ardent sincerity of purpose. He wrote several times against the Unitarians, but gladly allowed that many of them were thoroughly good men, honest and candid in argument,[3] nor did he even scruple to admit to a cordial friendship one of their most distinguished leaders, Thomas Firmin, a man of great beneficence and philanthropy.

There was no reservation in Tillotson's mind as to the general

[1] Qu. in J. Hunt's *Religious Thought in England*, iii. 45. [2] Id.
[3] S. xliv., *Works*, iii. 310.

right of private judgment. 'Any man that hath the spirit of a man must abhor to submit to this slavery not to be allowed to examine his religion, and to inquire freely into the grounds and reasons of it; and would break with any Church in the world upon this single point; and would tell them plainly, "If your religion be too good to be examined, I doubt it is too bad to be believed."'[1] He grounded the right on three principles.[2] The first was, that essentials are so plain that every man of ordinary capacities, after receiving competent instruction, is able to judge of them. This, he added, was no new doctrine of the Reformation, but had been expressly owned by such ancient fathers as St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine. The second was, that it was a Scriptural injunction. St. Luke, in the Acts, St. Paul and St. John in their Epistles, had specially commended search, examination, inquiry, proof. The third was, that even those who most disputed the right were forced nevertheless to grant it in effect. Whenever they make a proselyte they argue with him, they appeal to his reason, they bid him to use his judgment. If it were urged that it could not be accordant to the Divine purpose to give full scope to a liberty which distracted unity and gave rise to so much controversy and confusion,—we must judge, he replied, by what is, not by what we fancy ought to be. We could be relieved from the responsibilities of judging for ourselves only by the existence of an infallible authority to which we could appeal. This is not granted either in temporal or in spiritual matters. Nor is it needed. A degree of certainty sufficient for all our needs is attainable without it. Even in Apostolic times, when it might be said to have existed, error and schism were not thereby prevented. 'With charity and mutual forbearance, the Church may be peaceful and happy without absolute unity of opinion.'[3] Let it be enough that we have guides to instruct us in what is plain, and to guide us in more doubtful matters. After all, 'there is as much to secure men from mistakes in matters of belief, as God hath afforded to keep men from sin in matters of practice. He hath made no effectual and infallible provision that men shall not sin; and yet it would puzzle any man to give a good reason why God should take more care to secure men against errors in belief than against sin and wickedness in their lives.'[4]

Tillotson, however, did not omit to add four cautions as to the proper limits within which the right of private judgment should be exercised. (1) A private person must only judge for himself,

[1] S. lviii., *Works*, v. 84.
[2] S. xxi., *Works*, ii. 267.
[3] Id. 273.
[4] Id. 277.

not impose his judgment on others. His only claim to that liberty is that it belongs to all. (2) The liberty thus possessed does not dispense with the necessity of guides and teachers in religion; nor (3) with due submission to authority. 'What by public consent and authority is determined and established ought not to be gainsaid by private persons but upon very clear evidence of the falsehood or unlawfulness of it; nor is the peace and unity of the Church to be violated upon every scruple and frivolous pretence.' (4) There are a great many who, from ignorance or insufficient capacity, are incompetent to judge of any controverted question. 'Such persons ought not to engage in disputes of religion; but to beg God's direction and to rely upon their teachers; and above all to live up to the plain dictates of natural light, and the clear commands of God's word, and this will be their best security.'[1]

There has probably been no period in which liberty of thought on religious subjects has been debated in this country so anxiously, so vehemently, so generally, as in the earlier part of the eighteenth century. The Reformation had hinged upon it; but general principles were then greatly obscured in the excitement of change, and amid the multiplicity of secondary questions of more immediate practical interest. For a hundred and fifty years after the first breach with Rome, it may be said that private judgment was most frequently considered in connection with a power of option between different Church communions. A man had to choose whether he would adhere to the old, or adopt the new form of faith—whether he would remain staunch to the reformed Anglican Church, or cast in his lot with the Puritans, or with one or other of the rising sects,—whether Episcopacy or Presbyterianism most conformed to his ideas of Church government. When at last these controversies had abated, the full importance of the principles involved in this new liberty of thought began to be fully felt. Their real scope and nature, apart from any transient applications, engaged great attention, first among the studious and thoughtful, among philosophers and theologians, but before long throughout the country generally. Locke among philosophers, Tillotson and Chillingworth among divines, addressed their reasonings not to the few, but to the many. Their arguments however would not have been so widely and actively discussed, had it not been for the Deists. Free-thought in reference to certain ecclesiastical topics had been for several generations familiar to every Englishman; but just at a time when reflecting persons of every class were beginning to

[1] S. xxi., *Works*, ii. 265–7.

inquire what was implied in this liberty of thought and choice, the term was unhappily appropriated by the opponents of revelation, and, as if by common consent, conceded to them. Notwithstanding all that could be urged by a number of eminent and influential preachers and writers, freethinking became a term everywhere associated with Deism and disbelief. It was a suicidal error, which rapidly gained ground, and lingers still. The Deists gained great advantage from it. They started as it were with an unchallenged verbal assumption that the most fundamental principle of correct reasoning was on their side. All inquiries as to truth, all sound research, all great reforms, demand free thought; and they were the acknowledged Freethinkers. A name could not have been chosen more admirably adapted to create, especially in young and candid minds, a prejudice in their favour. For the same reason, all who asserted the duty of fearless investigation in the interests of Christianity could only do so under penalty of incurring from many quarters loudly expressed suspicions of being Deists in disguise. Tillotson was by strong conviction an advocate of freethought. 'He is a Freethinker,' said all who were afraid of liberty. 'Therefore no doubt he is undermining Revelation, he is fighting the battle of the Deists.' 'Yes,' echoed the Deists, glad to persuade themselves that they had the sanction of his authority. 'He is a Freethinker; if not one of us, at all events he is closely allied with us.' Yet, on the whole, his fame and influence probably gained by it. Many who were inclined to Deistical opinions were induced to read Tillotson, and to feel the force of his arguments, who would never have opened a page of such a writer as Leslie. Many, again, who dreaded the Deists, but were disturbed by their arguments, were wisely anxious to see what was advanced against them by the distinguished prelate who had been said to agree with them in some of their leading principles. Meanwhile liberty of thought, independently of 'Freethinking,' in the obnoxious sense of the word, attracted a growing amount of attention. The wide interest felt in the ponderous Bangorian controversy, as it dragged on its tedious course, is in itself ample evidence of the desire to see some satisfactory adjustment of the respective bounds of authority and reason. No doubt Tillotson did more than any one else, Locke only excepted, to create this interest. It was an immense contribution to the general progress of intelligent thought on religious subjects, to do as much as was effected by these two writers in removing abstract ideas from the domain of theological and philosophical speculation, and transferring them, not perhaps without some loss of preciseness and definition, to the popular language of ordinary life. The eighteenth century erred much in trusting too

implicitly to the powers of 'common sense.' Yet this direct appeal to the average understanding was in many ways productive of benefit. It induced people to realise to themselves, more than they had done, what it was they believed, and to form intelligible conceptions of theological tenets, instead of vaguely accepting upon trust what they had learnt from their religious teachers. Even while it depressed for the time the ideal of spiritual attainment, the defect was temporary, but the work real. 'By clearing away,' says Dorner, 'much dead matter, it prepared the way for a reconstruction of theology from the very depths of the heart's belief.'[1]

In calling upon all men to test their faith by their reason, Tillotson had to explain the relations of human reason to those articles of belief which lie beyond its grasp. There was the more reason to do this, because of the difficulties which were felt, and the disputes which had arisen about 'mysteries' in religion. Undoubtedly it is a word very capable of misuse. 'Times,' says the author last quoted, 'unfruitful in theological knowledge are ever wont to fall back upon mystery and upon the much abused demand of "taking the reason prisoner to the obedience of faith."' With some, religion has thus been made barren and ineffectual by being regarded as a thing to be passively accepted without being understood. Among others, it has been degraded into superstition by the same cause. When an appetite for the mysterious has been cherished, it becomes easy to attribute spiritual results to material causes, to the confusion of the first principles alike of morality and of knowledge. Some, through an ambition of understanding the unintelligible, have wasted their energies in a labyrinth of scholastic subtleties; others have surrendered themselves to a vague unpractical mysticism.

But, whatever may have been the errors common in other ages, it was certainly no characteristic of the eighteenth century to linger unhealthily upon the contemplation of mysteries. The predominant fault was one of a directly opposite nature. There was apt to be an impatience of all mystery, a contemptuous neglect of all that was not self-evident or easy to understand. 'The Gospel,' it was said, 'professes plainness and uses no hard words.'[2] Whatever was obscure was only the imperfection of the old dispensation, or the corruption of the new, and might be excluded from the consideration of rational beings. Even in the natural world there was most mystery in the things which least concern us; Divine providence had ordered that what was most

[1] J. A. Dorner, *History of Protestant Theology*, ii. 77.
[2] Sir R. Howard's *History of Religion*, 1694.

necessary should be least obscure. Much too was added about the priestcraft and superstition which had commonly attended the inculcation of mysterious doctrines. In all such arguments there was a considerable admixture of truth. But in its general effect it tended greatly to depress the tone of theological thought, to take away from it sublimity and depth, and to degrade religion into a thing of earth.[1] Even where it did not controvert any of the special doctrines of revealed religion, it inclined men to pass lightly over them, or at all events to regard them only in their directly practical aspects, and so to withdraw from the soul, as if they were but idle speculations, some of the most elevating subjects of contemplation which the Christian faith affords. Such reasoners were strangely blind to the thought that few could be so inertly commonplace in mind and feeling, as to rest satisfied with being fired to virtuous deeds by the purely practical side of transcendental truths, without delighting in further reflection on the very nature of those mysteries themselves. Nor did they at all realise, that independently of any direct results in morality and well-being, it is no small gain to a man to be led by the thought of Divine mysteries to feel that he stands on the verge of a higher world, a higher nature, of which he may have scarcely a dim perception, but to which creatures lower than himself in the scale of being are wholly insensible. There was little feeling that truths which baffle reason may be, and must be, nevertheless accordant with true reason. It was left to William Law, a writer who stood much apart from the general spirit of his age, to remark: 'This is the true ground and nature of the mysteries of Christian redemption. They are, in themselves, nothing else but what the nature of things requires them to be . . . but they are mysteries to man, because brought into the scheme of redemption by the interposition of God to work in a manner above and superior to all that is seen and done in the things of this world.'[2]

Nothing very instructive or suggestive must be looked for from Tillotson on the subject of Divine mysteries. He was too much of an eighteenth-century man, if it may be so expressed, to be able to give much appreciative thought to anything that lay beyond the direct province of reason. Yet, on the other hand, he was too deeply religious, and too watchful an observer, not to perceive that the unspiritual and sceptical tendencies of his age were fostered by the disparagement of all suprasensual ideas. The consequence is, that he deals with the subject without ease,

[1] Cf. M. Pattison in *Essays and Reviews*, 293–4.
[2] W. Law, 'Spirit of Love,' *Works*, viii. 141.

and with the air of an apologist. This remark does not so much relate to the miracles. Upon them he constantly insists as a very material part of distinctly rational evidence. But mysteries, apart from any evidential character which they may possess, he clearly regards almost entirely in the sense of difficulties, necessary to be believed, but mere impediments to faith rather than any assistance to it. 'Great reverence,' he says, 'is due to them where they are certain and necessary in the nature and reason of the thing, but they are not easily to be admitted without necessity and very good evidence.'[1] He is not sure whether much that seems mysterious may not be in some degree explained as compliances, for the sake of our edification, with human modes of thought.[2] On the whole, he is inclined to reduce within as narrow a compass as possible the number of tenets which transcend our faculties of reason, to receive them, when acknowledged, with reverential submission, but to pass quickly from them, as matters in which we have little concern, and which do not greatly affect the practical conduct of life. His extreme distaste for anything that appeared to him like idle speculation or unprofitable controversy, often blinded him in a very remarkable degree to the evident fact, that the very same mysterious truths which have given occasion to many futile speculations, many profitless disputes, are also, in every Christian communion, rich in their supply of Christian motives and practical bearings upon conduct.

Tillotson's opinions on points of doctrine were sometimes attacked with a bitterness of rancour only to be equalled by the degree of misrepresentation upon which the charges were founded. Leslie concludes his indictment against him and Burnet by saying that 'though the sword of justice be (at present) otherwise employed than to animadvert upon these blasphemers, and though the chief and father of them all is advanced to the throne of Canterbury, and thence infuses his deadly poison through the nation,' yet at least all 'ought to separate from the Church communion of these heretical bishops.'[3] Yet, if we examine the arguments upon which this invective is supported, and compare with their context the detached sentences which his hot-blooded antagonist adduces, we shall find that Tillotson maintained no opinion which would not be considered in a modern English Churchman to be at all events perfectly legitimate. Had his opponents been content to point out serious deficiencies in the general tendency of his teaching, they would have held a thoroughly tenable position. When they attempted to attach to

[1] S. xlvi., *Works*, iii. 359.
[2] Id.
[3] C. Leslie, *Works*, ii. 669.

his name the stigma of specific heresies, they failed. He thought for himself, and sometimes very differently from them, but never wandered far from the paths of orthodoxy. Accusations of Socinianism were freely circulated both against him and Burnet, on grounds which chiefly serve to show within what narrow grooves religious thought would have been confined by the objectors. Burnet, whose theological discourses received Tillotson's hearty commendation, has fully stated what appears to have been the less clearly conceived opinion of the archbishop. There was no tincture of Arianism in it ; he showed on the contrary, with much power, the utter untenability of that hypothesis. The worship of Christ, he said, is so plainly set forth in the New Testament, that not even the opposers of His divinity deny it ; yet nothing is so much condemned in Scripture as worshipping a creature.[1] 'We may well and safely determine that Christ was truly both God and Man.'[2] But he held that this true Divinity of Christ consisted in 'the indwelling of the Eternal Word in Christ,' which 'became united to His human nature, as our souls dwell in our bodies and are united to them.'[3] As Leslie said, he did in effect explain the doctrine of the Trinity as three manifestations of the Divine nature. 'By the first, God may be supposed to have made and to govern all things ; by the second, to have been most perfectly united to the humanity of Christ ; and by the third, to have inspired the penmen of the Scriptures and the workers of miracles, and still to renew and fortify all good minds. But though we cannot explain how they are Three and have a true diversity from one another, so that they are not barely different names and modes ; yet we firmly believe that there is but one God.'[4] A jealous and disputatious orthodoxy might be correct in affirming that this exposition of the Trinity was a form of Sabellianism, and one which might perhaps be accepted by some of the Unitarians. It is stated here rather to show on what scanty grounds the opponents of the 'Latitudinarian bishops' founded one of their chief accusations of Socinian heresy.

But this was only part of the general charge. It was also said that Tillotson was a 'rank Socinian' in regard of his views upon the doctrine of the satisfaction made by Christ for the sins of men. The ground of offence lay in his great dislike for anything which seemed to savour less of Scripture than of scholastic refinements in theology. He thought it great rashness to prescribe limits, as it were, to infinite wisdom, and to affirm that

[1] Burnet's *Four Discourses*, 122.
[2] Id. 127. [3] Id. [4] Id. 134.

man's salvation could not possibly have been wrought in any other way than by the incarnation and satisfaction of the Son of God.[1] A Christian reasoner may well concede that he can form no conjecture in what variety of modes redeeming love might have been manifested. He has no need to build theories upon what alone is possible, when the far nobler argument is set before him, to trace the wisdom and the fitness of the mode which God's providence actually has chosen. Tillotson raised no question whatever as to the manner in which redemption was effected, but stated it in exactly such terms as might have been used by any preacher of the day. For example : 'From these and many other texts it seems to be very plain and evident, that Christ died for our sins, and suffered in our stead, and by the sacrifice of Himself hath made an atonement for us and reconciled us to God, and hath paid a price and ransom for us, and by the merits of his death hath purchased for us forgiveness of sins.'[2]

Nevertheless the charge was brought against him, as it was in a less degree against Burnet and other Low Churchmen of this time, of 'disputing openly against the satisfaction of Christ.' This deserves some explanation. For though in the mere personal question there can be little historical interest, it is instructive, as illustrating an important phase of religious thought. The charge rested on three or four different grounds. There was the broad general objection, as it seemed to some, that Tillotson was always searching out ways of bringing reason to bear even on Divine mysteries, where they held its application to be impertinent and almost sacrilegious. His refusal, already mentioned, to allow that the sacrifice of Christ's death was the only conceivable way in which, consistently with the Divine attributes, sin could be forgiven, was a further cause for displeasure. It did not at all fall in with a habit which, both in pulpit and in argumentative divinity, had become far too customary, of speaking of the Atonement with a kind of legal, or even mathematical exactness, as of a debt which nothing but full payment can cancel, or of a problem in proportion which admits only of one solution. Then, although Tillotson defended the propriety of the term 'satisfaction,' he had observed that the word was nowhere found in Scripture, and would apparently have not regretted its disuse. It was a graver proof of doctrinal laxity, if not of heresy, in the estimation of many, that although for his own part he always spoke of Christ suffering 'in our stead,' he had thought it perfectly immaterial whether it were expressed thus

[1] S. xlvi., *Works*, iii. 359, and 383, 389. [2] S. ccxxvii., *Works*, ix. 337.

or 'for our benefit.' It was all 'a perverse contention which signified just nothing. . . . For he that dies with an intention to do that benefit to another as to save him from death, doth certainly, to all intents and purposes, die in his place and stead.'[1] Certainly, in these words Tillotson singularly underrated a very important difference. Our whole conception of the meaning of Redemption, that most fundamental doctrine of all Christian theology, is modified by an acceptance of the one rather than of the other expression. In our own days one interpretation is considered as legitimate in the English Church as the other. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, a cramped and mistaken orthodoxy, which did much harm, was apt to represent the translation 'for our sakes' as connected exclusively with Deistical or Unitarian opinions. From that point of view, we can understand how Leslie declared with bitterness, that although the Archbishop wrote against the Socinians, 'it was really to do them service, and reconcile men more to their principles by lessening the differences which are conceived betwixt them and us.'[2]

Another cause which stirred great animosity against Tillotson as a theological writer consisted in his partial acceptance of that principle of 'accommodation' which was afterwards made so much use of by Semler and many other German writers. Thus, the natural love of mystery which, in man's unenlightened state, had been fruitful in fantastical and unworthy superstitions, was gently guided to the contemplation of a mystery of godliness—God manifested in the flesh—so great, so wonderful, so infinite in mercy, as to 'obscure and swallow up all other mysteries.'[3] The inclination of mankind to the worship of a visible and sensible Deity was diverted into its true channel by the revelation of one to whom, as the 'brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His person,' divine worship might be paid 'without danger of idolatry, and without injury to the divine nature.'[4] The apotheosis of heroes, the tendency to raise to semi-divine honours great benefactors of the race, was sublimely superseded[5] by the exaltation to the right hand of the Majesty on high of one who is not half but wholly infinite, and yet true man and the truest benefactor of our race; One that 'was dead and is alive again, and lives for evermore.' The religious instinct which craved for mediation and intercession was gratified, and the worship of saints made for the future inexcusable, by the gift of one Mediator between God and men, a perpetual advocate

[1] S. xlvii., *Works*, iii. 403. [2] C. Leslie, *Works*, ii. 281.
[3] S. xlvi., *Works*, iii. 362. [4] Id. 363. [5] Id. 364.

and intercessor.[1] It was the same, Tillotson added, with sacrifice. On this point he dilated more at length. The sacrificial character, he said, of the atonement was not to be explained in any one manner. To open a way of forgiveness which would at the same time inspire a deep feeling of the guilt and consequences of sin, and create a horror of it, which would kindle fervent love to the Saviour, and pity for all in misery as He had pity on us; these are some of the effects which the sacrifice of Christ is adapted to fulfil, and there may be other divine counsels hidden in it of which we know little or nothing. But he thought that further explanation might be found in a tender condescension to certain religious ideas which almost everywhere prevailed among mankind. Unreasonable as it was to suppose that the blood of slain animals could take away sin, sacrifice had always been resorted to. Perhaps it implied a confession of belief that sin cannot be pardoned without suffering. Whatever the ground and foundation may have been, at all events, both among Jews and heathens, it was an established principle that 'without shedding of blood there is no remission.' God's providence may be deemed to have adapted itself to this general apprehension, not in order to countenance these practices, but for the future to abolish them, deepening at the same time and spiritualising the meaning involved in them. 'Very probably in compliance with this apprehension of mankind, and in condescension to it, as well as for other weighty reasons best known to the divine wisdom, God was pleased to find out such a sacrifice as should really and effectually procure for them that great blessing of the forgiveness of sins which they had so long hoped for from the multitude of their own sacrifices.'[2]

It is curious to see in what sort of light these not very formidable speculations were construed by some of Tillotson's contemporaries. 'He makes,' says Leslie, 'the foundation of the Christian religion to be some foolish and wicked fancies, which got into people's heads, he knows not and says no matter how; and instead of reforming them, and commanding us to renounce and abhor them, which one would have expected, and which Christ did to all other wickedness, the doctor's scheme is, that God, in compliance with them, and to indulge men in these same wild and wicked fancies, did send Christ, took His life, and instituted the whole economy of the Christian religion.'[3] The construction put upon the Archbishop's words is curious but deplorable. It is not merely that it exemplifies, though not in nearly so great a degree as other passages which might be quoted,

[1] S. xlvi., *Works* iii. 365 [2] S. xlvii. *Works*, iii. 398. [3] Leslie, ii. 562.

the polemical virulence which was then exceedingly common, and which warped the reasoning powers of such men of talent and repute as Leslie. The encouragement which attacks made in this spirit gave to the Deism and infidelity against which they were directed, was a far more permanent evil. Much may be conceded to the alarm not unnaturally felt at a time when independent thought was beginning to busy itself in the investigation of doctrines which had been generally exempt from it, and when all kinds of new difficulties were being started on all sides. But the many who felt difficulties, and honestly sought to find a solution of them, were constantly driven into open hostility by the unconciliatory treatment they met with. Their most moderate departures from the strictest path of presumed orthodox exposition were clamorously resented; their interpretations of Christian doctrine, however religiously conceived, and however worthy of being at least fairly weighed, were placed summarily under a ban; and those Church dignitaries in whom they recognised some sort of sympathy were branded as 'Sons of Belial.' There can be no doubt that at the end of the seventeenth, and in the earlier part of the eighteenth centuries, many men, who under kindlier conditions would have been earnest and active Churchmen, were unconsciously forced, by the intolerance which surrounded them, into the ranks of the Deists or the Unitarians.

In the general charge preferred against Tillotson of dangerous and heretical opinion there was yet another item which attracted far more general attention than the rest. 'This new doctrine,' says Leslie, 'of making hell precarious doth totally overthrow the doctrine of the satisfaction of Christ.'[1] Of this particular inference, which would legitimately follow only upon a very restricted view of the meaning of atonement, there is no need of speaking. But the opinion itself, as stated in Tillotson's sermon on what was often described as 'the dispensing power,' is so important that any estimate of his influence upon religious thought would be very imperfect without some mention of it. There are many theological questions of great religious consequence which are discussed nevertheless only in limited circles, and are familiar to others chiefly in their practical applications. The future state is a subject in which everyone has such immediate personal concern, that arguments which seem likely to throw fresh light upon it, especially if put forward by an eminent and popular divine, are certain to obtain very wide and general attention. Tillotson's sermon not only gave rise to much warm controversy among learned writers, but was eagerly debated in almost all classes of English society.

[1] Leslie, ii. 596.

Perhaps there has never been a period in Christian history when the prospects of the bulk of mankind in the world beyond the grave have been enwrapped in such unmitigated gloom in popular religious conception, as throughout the Protestant countries of Europe during a considerable part of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This is no place to compare Scripture texts, or to show in what various senses the words of Christ and His Apostles have been interpreted. It may be enough to remark in passing that perhaps no Christian writer of any note has ever doubted the severe reality of retribution on unrepented sin. Without further reference then to the Apostolic age, it is certain that among the early fathers of the Church there was much difference of opinion as to the nature, degree, and duration of future punishment. Hermas, in one of those allegories which for three centuries enjoyed an immense popularity, imagined an infinite variety of degrees of retribution.[1] Irenæus and Justin Martyr, in closely corresponding words, speak of its period of duration as simply dependent upon the will of God.[2] The Christian Sibylline books cherished hopes in the influence of intercession. Ambrose and Lactantius,[3] Jerome,[4] and in a far more notable degree, Clement of Alexandria[5] and Origen write of corrective fires of discipline in the next world, if not in this, to purify all souls, unless there are any which, being altogether bad, sink wholly in the mighty waters.[6] 'Augustine's writings show how widely those questions were discussed. He rejects the Origenian doctrine, but does not consider it heretical. . . . None of the first four general councils laid down any doctrine whatever concerning the everlasting misery of the wicked. Yet the question had been most vehemently disputed.'[7] Throughout the Middle Ages, religious terrorism in its barest and most material form was an universal, and sometimes no doubt a very efficient instrument of moral control; but small consideration is needed

[1] Quotations from the *Shepherd* of Hermas, in a review of vol. i. of the *Ante-Nicene Library* in the *Spectator*, July 27, 1867, p. 836.

[2] Just. Mart. *Dial. cum Tryph.* i. b. i. § v. 20 (ed. W. Trollope, 1846); also Iren. *Hær.* ii. 34, 3, quoted in note to above.

[3] *Sibyll.* ver. 331. Ambrose, *De Psalm.* 36, v. 15; *Serm.* xx. § 12; Lactant. *Div. Inst.* vii. 21, all quoted in H. B. Wilson's speech, 1863, 102–10.

[4] Jerome, *Com. in Is.* tom. 3, ed. Ben. 514, quoted by Le Clerc, *Bib. Choisie*, vii. 326.

[5] Clem. Alex. *Strom.* vii. § 6, p. 851, quoted in Blunt, J. J., *Early Fathers*, p. 80.

[6] Origen, *Hom.* 6, in *Ex. N.* 4, quoted by Wilson, and *De Princip.* iii. c. v–vi. quoted by Blunt, *Early Fathers*, 99, and Le Clerc, *Bibliothique Choisie*, vii. 327.

[7] Wilson, 119 and 99.

to perceive how these fears must have been at once tempered and partly neutralised by the belief in purgatory—tempered by the hope that pains preceding judgment might take the place of ultimate penalties, and almost neutralised by the superstitious idea that such purgatorial sufferings might be lightened and shortened by extraneous human agencies independent of the purification and renewal of the sinful soul. Throughout the earlier period of the Reformation, and especially in England, the protest of Protestantism was mainly against specific abuses in the Church, and against the Papal supremacy. Two or three generations had to pass away before habits of thought engrained for ages in the popular mind were gradually effaced. In spite of the rapid growth of Puritanism, and of the strong hold gained by an extreme form of Calvinism on some of the leading Churchmen of Queen Elizabeth's time, the faith of the mass of the people was still a combination, in varied proportions, of the old and the new. The public mind had utterly revolted against the system of indulgences; but it would be very rash to assume that men's ideas of the eternal state were not largely and widely modified by an undefined tradition of purifying fires. Although this may not have been the case with the clergy and others who were familiar with controversy, there was certainly among them also a strong disinclination to pronounce any decided or dogmatical opinion about that unknown future. This is traceable in the various writings elicited by the omission of the latter part of the third article in the Revision under Archbishop Parker; and is more palpably evident in the entire excision of the forty-second article, which for ten years had committed the Church of England to an express opinion as to the irreparable state of the condemned. But long before the seventeenth century had closed, orthodox opinion seems to have set almost entirely in the direction of the sternest and most hopeless interpretation possible. Bishop Rust of Dromore, who died in 1670, ardently embraced Origen's view.[1] So also did Sir Henry Vane, the eminent Parliamentary leader, who was beheaded for high treason in 1662.[2] A few Nonconformist congregations adopted similar opinions. The Cambridge Platonists—insisting prominently, as most writers of a mystical turn have done, upon that belief in the universal fatherhood of God, which had infused a gentler tone, scarcely compatible with much that he wrote, even into Luther's spirit—inclined to a milder theology. Henry More ventured to hope that 'the benign principle will get the upper hand at last, and

[1] J. T. Rutt, note to Calamy's *Own Life*, i. 140.
[2] Biog. D., *Vane*.

Hades, as Plutarch says, ἀπολείπεσθαι, be left in the lurch.'[1] But these were exceptions. For the most part, among religious writers of every school of thought there was perfect acquiescence in a doctrine of intolerable never-ending torments, and no attempt whatever to find some mode of explanation by which to escape from the horrors of the conception. Pearson and Bull, Lake and Kettlewell, Bentley, Fleetwood, Worthington,[2] Sherlock, Steele and Addison, Bunyan and Doddridge theologians and scholars, Broad Churchmen and Nonjurors, preachers and essayists, Churchmen and Nonconformists—expressed themselves far more unreservedly than is at all usual in our age, even among those who, in theory, interpret Scripture in the same sense. The hideous imagery depicted by the graphic pencil of Orcagna on the walls of the Campo Santo was reproduced no less vividly in the prose works of Bunyan, and with equal vigour, if not with equal force of imagination, by almost all who sought to kindle by impassioned pulpit appeals the conscience of their hearers. Young's poem of 'The Last Day,' in which panegyrics of Queen Anne are strangely blended with a powerful and awe-inspiring picture of the most extreme and hopeless misery, was highly approved, we are told, not only by general readers but by the Tory Ministry and their friends.[3] No doubt the practical and regulative faith which exercised a real influence upon life was of quite a different nature. A tenet which cannot be in the slightest degree realised, except perhaps in special moments of excitement or depression, is rendered almost neutral and inefficacious by the conscience refusing to dwell upon it. Belief in certain retribution compatible with human ideas of justice and goodness cannot fail in practical force. A doctrine which does not comply with this condition, if not questioned, is simply evaded. 'And dost thou not,' cried Adams, 'believe what thou hearest in Church?' 'Most part of it, Master,' returned the host. 'And dost not thou then tremble at the thought of eternal punishment?' 'As for that, Master,' said he, 'I never once thought about it; but what signifies talking about matters so far off?'[4] But if by the majority the doctrine in point was practically shelved, it was everywhere passively accepted as the only orthodox faith, and

[1] H. More, *Works*, ed. 1712. *On the Immortality of the Soul*, b. iv. ch. xix. § 9.

[2] Worthington's unhesitating acceptance of the tenet in question (*Essay on Man's Redemption*, 1748, 308) is particularly noticeable, because he was an ardent believer in the gradual restoration of mankind in general to a state of perfection.

[3] *Life of Young*. Anderson's *British Poets*, x. 10.

[4] Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*, b. ii. ch. 3.

all who ventured to question it were at once set down as far advanced in ways of Deism or worse.

Nothing can be more confirmatory of what has been said than the writings of Tillotson himself. His much-famed sermon 'On the Eternity of Hell Torments' was preached in 1690 before Queen Mary, a circumstance which gave occasion to some of the bitterest of his ecclesiastical and political opponents to pretend that it was meant to assuage the horrors of remorse felt by the Queen for having unnaturally deserted her father.[1] His departure, however, from what was considered the orthodox belief was cautious in the extreme. He acknowledged indeed that the words translated by eternal and 'everlasting' do not always, in Scripture language, mean unending. But on this he laid no stress. He did not doubt, he said, that this at all events was their meaning wherever they occurred in the passages in question. He mentioned, only to set aside the objection raised by Locke and others, that death could not mean eternal life in misery.[2] He thought the solemn assertion applied typically to the Israelites, and confirmed (to show its immutability) by an oath that they should not 'enter into his rest,' entirely precluded Origen's idea of a final restitution.[3] He even supposed, although somewhat dubiously, that 'whenever we break the laws of God we fall into his hands and lie at his mercy, and he may, without injustice, inflict what punishment on us he pleases,'[4] and that in any case obstinately impenitent sinners must expect his threatenings to be fully executed upon them. But in this lay the turning-point of his argument. 'After all, he that threatens hath still the power of execution in his hand. For there is this remarkable difference between promises and threatenings—that he who promiseth passeth over a right to another, and thereby stands obliged to him in justice and faithfulness to make good his promise; and if he do not, the party to whom the promise is made is not only disappointed, but injuriously dealt withal; but in threatenings it is quite otherwise. He that threatens keeps the right of punishing in his own hands, and is not obliged to execute what he hath threatened any further than the reasons and ends of government do require.'[5] Thus Nineveh was absolutely threatened; 'but God understood his own right, and did what he pleased, notwithstanding the threatening he had denounced.' Such was Tillotson's theory of the 'dispensing power,' an argument in great measure adopted from the distinguished

[1] Birch, T., *Life of Tillotson*, cliv.
[2] Locke, J., *Reasonableness of Christianity*, Preface.
[3] S. xxxv., *Works*, iii. 85. [4] Id. 84.
[5] Id. and i. 511; S. cxl.

Arminian leader, Episcopius,[1] and which was maintained by Burnet, and vigorously defended by Le Clerc.[2] It was not, however, at all a satisfactory position to hold. Intellectually and spiritually, its level is a low one ; and even those who have thought little upon the subject will feel, for the most part, as by a kind of instinct, that this at all events is not the true explanation, though it may contain some germs of truth. To do reasonable justice to it, we must take into account the conflicting considerations by which Tillotson's mind was swayed. No one could appeal more confidently and fervently than he does to the perfect goodness of God, a goodness which wholly satisfies the human reason, and supplies inexhaustible motives for love and worship. We can reverence, he said, nothing but true goodness. A God wanting in it would be only 'an omnipotent evil, an irresistible mischief.'[3]

But side by side with this principal current of thought was another. Dismayed at the profligacy and carelessness he saw everywhere around him, he was evidently convinced that not fear only, but some overwhelming terror was absolutely necessary for even the tolerable restraint of human sin and passion. 'Whosoever,' he said, 'considers how ineffectual the threatening even of eternal torments is to the greatest part of sinners, will soon be satisfied that a less penalty than that of eternal sufferings would to the far greater part of mankind have been in all probability of little or no force.'

The result, therefore, of this twofold train of thought was this—that when Tillotson had once disburdened himself of a conviction which must have been wholly essential to his religious belief, and upon which he could not have held silence without a degrading feeling of insincerity, he then felt at liberty to suppress all further mention of it, and to lay before his hearers, without any qualification, in the usual language of his time, that tremendous alternative which he believed God himself had thought it necessary to proclaim. Probably Tillotson's own mind was a good deal divided on the subject between two opinions. In many respects his mind showed a very remarkable combination of old and new ideas, and perceptibly fluctuated between a timid adherence to tradition and a sympathy with other notions which had become unhappily and needlessly mixed up with imputations of Deism. In any case, what he has said upon this most important subject is a singular and exaggerated illustration of that prudential teaching which was a marked feature both

[1] Birch, clvi. [2] *Bibliothèque Choisie*, tom. vii. art. 7.
[3] S. ccxii., *Works*, ix. 84.

in Tillotson's theology and in the prevailing religious thought of his age.

In spite of what Tillotson might perhaps have wished, the suggestions hazarded in his thirty-fifth sermon made an infinitely greater impression than the unqualified warnings contained in the hundreds which he preached at other times. It seems to have had a great circulation, and probably many and mixed results. So far as it encouraged that abominable system, which was already falling like a blight upon religious faith, of living according to motives of expedience and the wiser chance, its effects must have been utterly bad. It may also have exercised an unsettling influence upon some minds. Although Tillotson was probably entirely mistaken in the conviction, by no means peculiar to him, that the idea of endless punishment adds any great, or even any appreciable, force to the thought of divine retribution awaiting unrepented sin, yet there would be much cause for alarm if (as might well be the case) the ignorant or misinformed leaped to the conclusion that the Archbishop had maintained that future, as distinguished from endless punishments, were doubtful. We are told that 'when this sermon of hell was first published, it was handed about among the great debauchees and small atheistical wits more than any new play that ever came out. He was not a man of fashion who wanted one of them in his pocket, or could draw it out at the coffee-house.'[1] In certain drawing-rooms, too, where prudery was not the fault, there were many fashionable ladies who would pass from the scandal and gossip of the day to applaud Tillotson's sermon in a sense which would have made him shudder.[2] Nothing follows from this, unless it be assumed that the profligates and worldlings of the period would have spent a single hour, not to say a life, differently, had he never preached the sermon which they discredited with their praise. It is possible, however, that through misapprehension, or through the disturbing effects upon some minds, quite apart from rational grounds, of any seeming innovation upon accustomed teaching, there may have been here and there real ground for the alarm which some very good people felt at these views having been broached. It must be acknowledged that Tillotson's theory of a dispensing power is not only unsatisfactory on other grounds, but possesses a dangerous quality of expansibility. However much he himself might protest against such a view, there was no particular reason why the easy and careless should not urge that God might perchance dispense with all future punishment of sin, and not only with its threatened endlessness.

[1] C. Leslie, *Works*, ii. 596–7.

[2] Young's *Poems*, Sat. vi.

Tillotson's theological faults were of a negative, far rather than of a positive character. The constant charges of heresy which were brought against him were ungrounded, and often serve to call attention to passages where he has shown himself specially anxious to meet Deistical objections. But there were deficiencies and omissions in his teaching which might very properly be regarded with distrust and alarm. In the generality of his sermons he dwells very insufficiently upon distinctive Christian doctrine. His early parishioners of Keddington, in Suffolk,[1] were more alive to this serious fault than the vast London congregations before whom he afterwards preached. He has himself, in one of his later sermons, alluded to the objection. 'I foresee,' he observed, 'what will be said, because I have heard it so often said in the like case, that there is not one word of Jesus Christ in all this. No more is there in the text, and yet I hope that Jesus Christ is truly preached, whenever His will, and the laws, and the duties enjoined by the Christian religion are inculcated upon us.'[2] Tillotson never adequately realised that the noblest treatise on Christian ethics will be found wanting in the spiritual force possessed by sermons far inferior to it in thought and eloquence, in which faith in the Saviour and love of Him are directly appealed to for motives to all virtuous effort. This very grave deficiency in the preaching of Tillotson and others of his type was in great measure the effect of reaction. Brought up in the midst of Calvinistic and Puritan associations, he had gained abundant experience of the great evil arising from mistaken ideas on free grace and justification by faith only. He had seen doctrines 'greedily entertained to the vast prejudice of Christianity, as if in this new covenant of the Gospel, God took all upon Himself and required nothing, or as good as nothing, of us; that it would be a disparagement to the freedom of God's grace to think that He expects anything from us; that the Gospel is all promises, and our part is only to believe and embrace them, that is, to believe confidently that God will perform them if we can but think so;'[3] 'that, in fact, religion [as he elsewhere puts it] consists only in believing what Christ hath done for us, and relying confidently upon it.'[4] He knew well—his father had been a bright example of it—that such doctrines are constantly

[1] They complained that Jesus Christ had not been preached among them since Mr. Tillotson had been settled in the parish. (Birch, xviii.) This was in 1663. The contrast between Tillotson's style and that of the Commonwealth preachers would in any case have been very marked, the more so as Puritanism gained a strong footing in the eastern counties.

[2] S. xlii. *Works*, iii. 275.

[3] S. vii., *Works*, i. 495.

[4] S. xxxiv., *Works*, iii. 65.

found in close union with great integrity and holiness of life. But he knew also the deplorable effects which have often attended even an apparent dissociation of faith and morality; he had seen, and still saw, how deep and permanent, both by its inherent evil and by the recoil that follows, is the wound inflicted upon true religion by overstrained professions, unreal phraseology, and the form without the substance of godliness. He saw clearly, what many have failed to see, that righteousness is the principal end of all religion; that faith, that revelation, that all spiritual aids, that the incarnation of the Son of God and the redemption He has brought, have no other purpose or meaning than to raise men from sin and from a lower nature, to build them up in goodness, and to renew them in the image of God. He unswervingly maintained that immorality is the worst infidelity,[1] as being not only inconsistent with real faith, but the contradiction of that highest end which faith has in view. Tillotson was a true preacher of righteousness. The fault of his preaching was that by too exclusive a regard to the object of all religion, he dwelt insufficiently on the way by which it is accomplished. If some had almost forgotten the end in thinking of the means, he was apt to overlook the means in thinking of the end. His eyes were so steadfastly fixed on the surpassing beauty of Christian morality, that it might often seem as if he thought the very contemplation of so much excellence were a sufficient incentive to it. His constantly implied argument is, that if men, gifted with common reason, can be persuaded to think what goodness is, its blessedness alike in this world and the next, and on the other hand the present and future consequences of sin, surely reason itself will teach them to be wise. He is never the mere moralist. His Christian faith is ever present to his mind, raising and purifying his standard of what is good, and placing in an infinitely clearer light than could otherwise be possible the sanctions of a life to come. Nor does he speak with an uncertain tone when he touches on any of its most distinctive doctrines. Never either in word or thought does he consciously disparage or undervalue them. Notwithstanding all that Leslie and others could urge against him, he was a sincere, and, in all essential points, an orthodox believer in the tenets of revealed religion. But he dwelt upon them insufficiently. He regarded them too much as mysteries of faith, established on good evidence, to be firmly held and reverently honoured; above all, not to be lightly argued about in tones of controversy. He never fully realised what a treasury they supply of motives to Christian conduct, and

[1] S. vii., *Works*, i. 499.

of material for sublime and ennobling thought; above all, that religion never has a missionary and converting power when they are not prominently brought forward.

Throughout the eighteenth century the prudential considerations against which Shaftesbury and a few others protested weighed like an incubus both upon religion and on morals. 'Oh Happiness! our being's end and aim,'[1] was the seldom failing refrain, echoed in sermons and essays, in theological treatises and ethical studies. And though the idea of happiness varies in endless degrees from the highest to the meanest, yet even the highest conception of it cannot be substituted for that of goodness without great detriment to the religion or philosophy which has thus unduly exalted it. When Tillotson, or Berkeley,[2] or Bishop Butler, or William Law, as well as Chubb[3] and Tindal,[4] spoke of happiness as the highest end, they meant something very different from 'the sleek and sordid epicurism, in which religion and a good conscience have their place among the means by which life is to be made more comfortable.'[5] William Law's definition of happiness as 'the satisfaction of all means, capacities, and necessities, the order and harmony of his being; in other words, the right state of a man,'[6] has not much in common with the motives of expedience urged by Bentham and Paley, utilitarian systems, truly spoken of as 'of the earth, earthy.'[7] But, in any case, even the highest conception of the expedient rests on a lower plane of principle than the humblest aspiration after the right. The expedient and the right are not opposites; they are different in kind.[8] They may be, and ought to be, blended as springs of action. No scheme of morals, and no practical divinity can be wholly satisfactory in which virtue and holiness are not equally mated with prudence and heavenly wisdom, each serving but not subservient to the other. 'Art thou,' says Coleridge, 'under the tyranny of sin—a slave to vicious habits, at enmity with God, and a skulking fugitive from thine own conscience? Oh, how idle the dispute whether the listening to the dictates of prudence from prudential and self-interested motives be virtue or merit, when the not listening is guilt, misery, madness, and despair.'[9] The self-love which Butler has analysed with so masterly a hand is wholly compatible with

[1] Pope's *Essay on Man*, Ep. 4.
[2] In *Guardian*, No. 55.
[3] 'Ground, &c., of Morality,' Chubb's *Works*, iii. 6.
[4] Dorner, iii. 81.
[5] M. Pattison in *Essays and Reviews*, 275.
[6] Quoted in F. D. Maurice's Preface to *Law's Answer to Mandeville*, lxx.
[7] Channing and Aikin's *Correspondence*, 46.
[8] Mackintosh's *Progress of Ethical Philosophy*, sect. i.
[9] S. T. Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection*, i. 37.

the pure love of goodness. Plato did not think it needful to deny the claims of utilitarianism, however much he gave the precedence to the ideal principle.[1]

But when the idea of goodness is subordinated to the pursuit of happiness, the evil effects are soon manifest. It is not merely that 'Epicureanism popularised inevitably turns to vice.'[2] Whenever in any form self-interest usurps that first place which the Gospel assigns to 'the Kingdom of God and his righteousness,' the calculating element draws action down to its own lower level. 'If you mean,' says Romola, 'to act nobly and seek the best things God has put within reach of men, you must learn to fix your mind on that end and not on what will happen to you because of it.'[3] It has been observed, too, with a truth none the less striking for being almost a commonplace, that there is something very self-destructive in the quest for happiness.[4] Happiness and true pleasure ultimately reward the right, but if they are made the chief object, they lose in quality and elude the grasp. 'So far as you try to be good, in order to be personally happy, you miss happiness—a great and beautiful law of our being.'[5]

Utilitarianism or eudæmonism has no sort of intrinsic connection with a latitudinarian theology, especially when the word 'latitudinarian' is used, as in this chapter, in a general and inoffensive sense. In this century, and to some extent in the last, many of its warmest opponents have been Broad Churchmen. But prudential religion, throughout the period which set in with the Revolution of 1688, is closely associated with the name of Tillotson. It is certainly very prominent in his writings. His keen perception of the exceeding beauty of goodness might have been supposed sufficient to guard him from dwelling too much upon inferior motives. Tillotson, however, was very susceptible to the predominant influences of his time. If he was a leader of thought, he was also much led by the thought of others. There were three or four considerations which had great weight with him, as they had with almost every other theologian and moralist of his own and the following age. One, which has been already sufficiently discussed, was that feeling of the need of proving the reasonableness of every argument, which was the first result of the wider field, the increased leisure, the greater freedom of which the reasoning powers had become conscious. It is evident that no system of morality and practical religion gives so much scope to the exercise of this faculty as that which pre-eminently

[1] Mackay, R. W., Introduction to *The Sophists*, 36.
[2] *Ecce Homo*, 114.
[3] G. Eliot, *Romola*, near the end.
[4] *Ecce Homo*, 115; cf. Coleridge, *The Friend*, Ess. xvi. i. 162.
[5] F. W. Robertson, *Life and Letters*, i. 352.

insists upon the prudence of right action and upon the wisdom of believing. Then again, the profligate habits and general laxity which undoubtedly prevailed to a more than ordinary extent among all classes of society, seem to have created even among reformers of the highest order a sort of dismayed feeling, that it was useless to set up too high a law, and that self-interest and fear were the two main arguments which could be plied with the best hopes of success. Thirdly, a very mistaken notion appears to have grown up that infidelity and 'free-thinking' might be checked by prudent reflections on the safeness of orthodoxy and the dangers of unbelief. Thought is not deterred by arguments of safety ;[1] and a sceptic is likely to push on into pronounced disbelief, if he commonly hears religion recommended as a matter of policy.

In all these respects Tillotson did but take the line which was characteristic of his age—of the age, that is, which was beginning, not of that which was passing away. Something, too, must be attributed to personal temperament. He carried into the province of religion that same benign but dispassionate calmness of feeling, that subdued sobriety of judgment, wanting in impulse and in warmth, which, in public and in private life, made him more respected as an opponent than beloved as a friend. To weigh evidence, to balance probabilities, and to act with tranquil confidence in what reason judged to be the wiser course, seemed to him as natural and fit in spiritual as in temporal matters. This was all sound in its degree, but there was a deficiency in it, and in the general mode of religious thought represented by it, which cannot fail to be strongly felt. There is something very chilling in such an appeal as the following : 'Secondly, it is infinitely most prudent. In matters of great concernment a prudent man will incline to the safest side of the question. We have considered which side of these questions is most reasonable : let us now think which is safest. For it is certainly most prudent to incline to the safest side of the question. Supposing the reasons for and against the principles of religion were equal, yet the danger and hazard is so unequal, as would sway a prudent man to the affirmative.'[2] It must not be inferred that nobler and more generous reasonings in relation to life and goodness do not continually occur. But the passage given illustrates a form of argument which is far too common, both in Tillotson's writings and throughout the graver literature of the eighteenth century. Without doubt it did much harm. So long as moralists

[1] Cf. F. D. Maurice's Introduction to *Law on Mandeville*, xxiii.
[2] S. ccxxiii., *Works*, ix. 275.

dwelt so fondly upon self-interest and expedience, and divines descanted upon the advantages of the safe side; so long as the ideal of goodness was half supplanted by that of happiness; so long as sin was contemplated mainly in its results of punishment, and redemption was regarded rather as deliverance from the penalties of sin than from the sin itself, Christianity and Christian ethics were inevitably degraded.

Many of the subjects touched upon in this chapter have little or no connection with Latitudinarianism, so far as it is synonymous with what are now more commonly called Broad Church principles. But in the eighteenth century 'reasonableness' in religious matters, although a characteristic watchword of the period in general, was especially the favourite term, the most congenial topic, upon which Latitudinarian Churchmen loved to dwell. The consistency of the Christian faith with man's best reason was indeed a great theme, well worthy to engage the thoughts of the most talented and pious men of the age. And no doubt Tillotson and many of his contemporaries and successors amply earned the gratitude, not only of the English Church, but of all Christian people in England. Their good service in the controversy with Deism was the first and direct, but still a temporary result of their labours. They did more than this. They broadened and deepened the foundations of the English Church and of English Christianity not only for their own day, but for all future time. They laboured not ineffectually in securing to reason that established position without which no religious system can maintain a lasting hold upon the intellect as well as upon the heart. On the other hand, their deficiencies were great, and appear the greater, because they were faults not so much of the person as of the age, and were displayed therefore in a wide field, and often in an exaggerated form. They loved reason not too well, but too exclusively; they acknowledged its limits, but did not sufficiently insist upon them. They accepted the Christian faith without hesitation or reserve; they believed its doctrines, they reverenced its mysteries, fully convinced that its truth, if not capable of demonstration, is firmly founded upon evidence with which every unprejudiced inquirer has ample reason to be satisfied. But where reason could not boldly tread, they were content to believe and to be silent. Hence, as they put very little trust in religious feelings, and utterly disbelieved in any power of spiritual discernment higher than, or different from reason, the greater part of their religious teaching was practically confined to those parts of the Christian creed which are palpable to every understanding. In their wish to avoid unprofitable disputations, they dwelt but cursorily upon debated subjects of

the last importance ; and in their dread of a correct theology doing duty for a correct life, they were apt grievously to underestimate the influences of theology upon life. Their moral teaching was deeply religious, pervaded by a sense of the overruling Providence of a God infinite in love and holiness, and was enforced perseveringly and with great earnestness by motives derived from the rewards and punishments of a future state. If a reader of Tillotson feels a sense of wonder that the writings of so good a man—of such deep and unaffected piety, so sympathetic and kindly, so thoroughly Christian-hearted—should yet be benumbed by the presence of a cold prudential morality which might seem incompatible with the self-forgetful impulses of warm religious feeling, he may see, in what he wonders at, the ill effects of a faith too jealously debarred by reason from contemplations in which the human mind quickly finds out its limits. When religion, in fear lest it should become unpractical, relaxes its hold upon what may properly be called the mysteries of faith, it not only loses in elevation and grandeur, but it defeats the very end it aimed at. It takes a lower ethical tone, and loses in moral power. To form even what may be in some respects an erroneous conception of an imperfectly comprehended doctrine, and so to make it bear upon the life, is far better than timidly, for fear of difficulties or error, to lay the thought of it aside, and so leave it altogether unfruitful. Tillotson and many of his successors in the last century had a great tendency to do this, and no excellences of personal character could redeem the injurious influence it had upon their writings. His services in the cause of religious truth were very great : they would have been far greater, and his influence a far more unmixed good, if as a representative leader of religious thought, he had been more superior to what was to be its most characteristic defect.

The Latitudinarian section of the Church of England won its chief fame, during the years that immediately followed the Revolution of 1688, by its activity in behalf of ecclesiastical comprehension and religious liberty. These exertions, so far as they extend to the history of the eighteenth century, and were continued through that period, will be considered in the following chapter.

C. J. A.

CHAPTER V.

LATITUDINARIAN CHURCHMANSHIP.

(2) CHURCH COMPREHENSION AND CHURCH REFORMERS.

The Latitudinarianism which occupies so conspicuous and important a place in English ecclesiastical history during the half century which followed upon the Revolution of 1688 has been discussed in some of its aspects in the preceding chapter. It denoted not so much a particular Church policy as a tone or mode of thought, which affected the whole attitude of the mind in relation to all that wide compass of subjects in which religious considerations are influenced by difference of view as to the province and authority of the individual reason.

But that which gave Latitudinarianism its chief notoriety, as well as its name, was a direct practical question. The term took its origin in the efforts made in William and Mary's reign to give such increased latitude to the formularies of the English Church as might bring into its communion a large proportion of the Nonconformists. From the first there was a disposition to define a Latitudinarian, much as Dr. Johnson did afterwards, in the sense of 'one who departs from orthodoxy.' But this was not the leading idea, and sometimes not even a part of the idea, of those who spoke with praise or blame of the eminent 'Latitudinarian' bishops of King William's time. Not many were competent to form a tolerably intelligent opinion as to the orthodoxy of this or that learned prelate, but all could know whether he spoke or voted in favour of the Comprehension Bill. Although therefore in the earlier stages of that projected measure some of the strictest and most representative High Churchmen were in favour of it, it was from first to last the cherished scheme of the Latitudinarian Churchmen, and in popular estimation was the visible badge, the tangible embodiment of their opinions.

The inclusiveness of the Reformed Church of England has never been altogether one-sided. It has always contained within its limits many who were bent on separating themselves by as wide an interval as possible from the Church of Rome, and many on the other hand who were no less anxious that the breach of unity should not be greater than was in any way consistent with spiritual independence and necessary reforms. The Reformation undoubtedly derived the greater part of its force and energy

from the former of these two parties ; to the temperate counsels of the latter it was indebted for being a movement of reform rather than of revolution. Without the one, religious thought would scarcely have released itself from the strong bonds of a traditional authority. Without the other, it would have been in danger of losing hold on Catholic belief, and of breaking its continuity with the past. Without either one or the other, the English Church would not only have lost the services of many excellent men, but would have been narrowed in range, lowered in tone, lessened in numbers, character, and influence. To use the terms of modern politics, it could neither have spared its Conservatives, though some of them may have been unprogressive or obstructionist, nor its Liberals, although the more advanced among them were apt to be rash and revolutionary.

At the opening of the eighteenth century, all notions of a wider comprehension in favour of persons who dissented in the direction of Rome, rather than of Geneva or Glasgow, were utterly out of question. One of the most strongly-marked features in the Churchmanship of the time, was the uncompromising hostility which everywhere displayed itself against Rome. This animosity was relieved by a mitigating influence in one direction only. Churchmen in this country could not fail to feel interest in the struggle for national independence in religious matters which was being carried on among their neighbours and ancestral enemies across the Channel. The Gallican Church was in the height of its fame, adorned by names which added lustre to it wherever the Christian faith was known. No Protestant, however uncompromising, could altogether withhold his admiration from a Fénelon,[1] a Pascal,[2] or a Bossuet. And all these three great men seemed more or less separated, though in different ways, from the regular Romish system. The spiritual and semi-mystical piety of Fénelon detached him from the trenchant dogmatism which, since the Council of Trent, had been stamped so much more decisively than heretofore upon Roman tenets. Pascal, notwithstanding his mediævalism, and the humble submissiveness which he acknowledged to be due to the Papal see, not only fascinated cultivated readers by the brilliancy of his style, not only won their hearts by the simple truthfulness and integrity of his character, but delighted Englishmen generally by the vigour of the attack with which, as leader of the Jansenists, he led the assault upon the Jesuits. Bossuet's noble defence of the Gallican liberties appealed still more directly to the sympa-

[1] Alison's *Life of Marlborough*, i. 199. Seward's *Anecdotes*, ii. 271. Jortin's *Tracts*, ii. 43. R. Savage's *Poems*, 'The Character,' &c.

[2] *Spectator*, No. 116.

thies of this nation. It reminded men of the conflict that had been fought and won on English soil, and encouraged too sanguine hopes that it might issue in a reformation within the sister country, not perhaps so complete as that which had taken place among ourselves, but not less full of promise. In the midst of the war that was raging between the rival forms of belief, English theologians of all opinions were pleased with his graceful recognition, in the name of the French clergy, of the services rendered to religion by Bishop Bull's learned 'Judgment of the Catholic Church.'[1]

Some time after the death of Bossuet, the renewed resistance which was being made in France against Papal usurpations gave rise to action on the part of the primate of our Church, which in the sixteenth century might have been cordially followed up in England, but in the eighteenth was very generally misunderstood and misrepresented. Archbishop Wake had taken a very distinguished part in the Roman controversy, directing his special attention to the polemical works of Bossuet, but had always handled these topics in a broader and more generous tone than many of his contemporaries. In 1717, at a time when many of the French bishops and clergy, headed by the Sorbonne, and by the Cardinal de Noailles, were indignantly protesting against the bondage imposed upon them by the Bull Unigenitus, and were proposing to appeal from the Pope to a general council, a communication was received by Archbishop Wake,[2] that Du Pin, head of the theological faculty of the Sorbonne, had expressed himself in favour of a possible union with the English Church.[3] The idea was warmly favoured by De Gerardin, another eminent doctor of that university. A correspondence of some length ensued, carried on with much friendly and earnest feeling on either side. Separation from Rome was what the English archbishop chiefly pressed ;[4] 'a reformation in other matters would follow of course.' Writing as he did without any official authority, he was wise enough not to commit himself to any details. First of all they ought 'to agree,' he said, 'to own each other as true brethren and members of the Catholic Christian Church ;' and then the great point would be to acknowledge 'the independence (as to all matters of authority) of every national Church on

[1] Nelson's *Life of Bull*, 329–30.

[2] Mosheim's *Church History*, Maclaine's edition, vol. v. 'Letter of Beauvoir to Wake,' December 11, 1717, Ap. 2, No. 2, p. 147.

[3] Id. Dupin to Wake, February 11, 1718. 'Unum addam, cum bonâ veniâ tuâ, me vehementer optare, ut unionis inter ecclesias Anglicanam et Gallicam via aliqua inveniri possit,' &c.

[4] Wake to Dupin, October 1, 1718. Id. 134, 152, 156.

all others,' agree with one another, as far as possible, on all matters of moment, and leave free liberty of disagreement on other questions. He did not see anything in our offices so essentially contrary to their principles, that they need scruple to join in them ; and if some alterations were made, we also might join in theirs, on a clear understanding that on all such points of disagreement as the doctrine of transubstantiation, either body of Christians should hold the opinions which it approved. Upon such terms,[1] two great national Churches might be on close terms of friendly intercommunion notwithstanding great differences on matters not of the first importance, which might well afford to wait 'till God should bring us to a union in those also.' Du Pin and De Gerardin replied in much the same spirit. The former of the two soon after died ; and the incipient negotiation, which was never very likely to be followed by any practical results, fell through. In fact, the resuscitated spirit of independence which had begun to stir in France was itself shortlived.

The correspondence between the English primate and the doctors of the Sorbonne is an episode which stands by itself, quite apart from any other incidents in the Church history of the time. It bears a superficial resemblance to the overtures made by some of the English and Scotch Nonjurors to the Eastern Church. There was, however, an essential difference between them. Without any dishonour to Nonjuring principles, and without passing any judgment upon the grounds of their separation, it must be acknowledged that those of them who renounced the communion of the English Church accepted a sectarian position. They had gained a comparative uniformity of opinion, at the entire expense of that breadth and expansiveness which only national Churches are found capable of. Connection with the Eastern Church, if it could have been carried out (though the difficulties in the way of this were far greater than they were at all aware of), would simply have indicated a movement of their whole body in one direction only, and, in proportion as it was successful, would have alienated them more than ever from those whose religious and ecclesiastical sympathies were of a very different kind. Such communion, on the other hand, of independent national Churches as was contemplated by Du Pin and Wake might have been quite free from one-sidedness of this description. It need not have interfered with or discouraged, it should rather have tended to promote, the near intercourse, which many English Churchmen were greatly desirous of, with the National Church of Scotland and with the reformed Churches

[1] Wake to Dupin, October 1, 1718, Ap. 3, No. 8, p. 158.

of the Continent. A relation of this kind with her sister Churches on either hand would have been in perfect harmony both with the original standpoint of the Church of England, and with an important office it may perhaps be called to in the future. It was in reference to the sympathetic reception given in this country to many of the proscribed bishops and clergy of France at the time of the great revolution, that the Count de Maistre made a remark which has often struck readers as well worthy of notice. 'If ever,'—he said, 'and everything invites to it—there should be a movement towards reunion among the Christian bodies, it seems likely that the Church of England should be the one to give it impulse. Presbyterianism, as its French nature rendered probable, went to extremes. Between us and those who practise a worship which we think wanting in form and substance, there is too wide an interval; we cannot understand one another. But the English Church, which touches us with the one hand, touches with the other those with whom we have no point of contact.'[1]

Archbishop Wake, had he lived in more favourable times, would have been well fitted, both by position and character, for this work of mutual conciliation. His disposition toward the foreign Protestant Churches was of the most friendly kind. In a letter to Le Clerc on the subject,[2] he deprecated dissension on matters of no essential moment. He desired to be on terms of cordial friendship with the Reformed Churches, notwithstanding their points of difference from that of England. He could wish they had a moderate Episcopal government, according to the primitive model; nor did he yet despair of it, if not in his own time, perhaps in days to come. He would welcome a closer union among all the Reformed bodies, at almost any price. The advantages he anticipated from such a result would be immense. Any approximations in Church government or Church offices which might conduce to it he should indeed rejoice in. Much to the same effect he wrote[3] to his 'very dear brothers,' the pastors and professors of Geneva. The letter related, in the first instance, to the efforts he had been making in behalf of the Piedmontese and Hungarian Churches. But he took occasion to express the longing desire he felt for union among the Reformed Churches—a work, he allowed, of difficulty, but which undoubtedly could be achieved, if all were bent on concord. He hoped he might not be thought trenching upon a province in which he had no concern, if he implored most earnestly both Lutherans and Reformed to be very

[1] De Maistre: *Considérations sur la France*, chap. ii. p. 30.
[2] April, 1719. *Mosheim*, v. 169, Ap. 3, No. 19.
[3] Ap. 8, 1719. Id. 171-3, Ap. 3, No. 20.

tolerant and forbearing in the mutual controversies they were engaged in upon abstruse questions of grace and predestination; above all, to be moderate in imposing terms of subscription, and to imitate in this respect the greater liberty of judgment and latitude of interpretation which the Church of England had wisely conceded to all who sign her articles. Archbishop Wake addressed other letters on these subjects to Professor Schurer of Berne, and to Professor Turretin of Geneva. He also carried on a correspondence with the Protestants of Nismes, Lithuania, and other countries. 'It may be affirmed,' remarks one of the editors of Mosheim's History, 'that no prelate since the Reformation had so extensive a correspondence with the Protestants abroad, and none could have a more friendly one.'[1] His behaviour towards Nonconformists at home was in his later years less conciliatory, and the inconsistency is a blemish in his character. The case would probably have been different if any schemes for union or comprehension had still been under consideration. In the absence of some such incentive, his mind, liberal as it was by nature and general habit, was overborne by the persistent clamour that the Dissenters were bent upon overthrowing the National Church, and that concession had become for the time impossible.

After the suppression of the Gallican liberties, the hostility between the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches was for a long time wholly unbroken. The theological controversy had abated. Pamphlet no longer followed upon pamphlet, and folio upon folio, as when, a few years before, every writer in divinity had felt bound to contribute his quota of argument to the voluminous stock, and when Tillotson hardly preached a sermon without some homethrust at Popery. But the general fear and hatred of it long continued unmitigated. So long, particularly, as there was any apprehension of Jacobite disturbances, it always seemed possible that Romanism might yet return with a power of which none could guess the force. Additions were still made to the long list of penalties and disabilities attached to Popish recusancy; and when, in 1778, a proposition was brought forward to abate them, it is well known what a storm of riot arose in Scotland and burst through England.

It might be thought that in the dull ebb-tide of spiritual energies which set in soon after the beginning of the eighteenth century, and prevailed wherever the Methodist movement did not reach, Rome, with her strong organisation and her experienced Propaganda, had as great a field before her as Wesley

[1] Maclaine's edition of *Mosheim*, v. 143.

had,—that she would have made rapid advance in spite of all disabilities,—and that, in consequence, the Protestant fears, which had been subsiding into indifference, would have arisen again in full force. But Rome shared in the strange religious apathy which was dominant not in England only, but the Continent. Her writers generally acknowledge the greater part of the eighteenth century to have been a period of comparative inactivity,[1] broken at last only by the violent stimulus of the Revolution. Many thought that Romanism continued to gain ground in England, and some cried out that still stricter laws were needed to suppress the Papists. It is doubtful, however, whether advances in some quarters were not more than balanced by losses elsewhere. As the century advanced, Rome gradually ceased to be dreaded as a subtle pervading power, full of mysterious activity, whose force might be felt most severely at the very moment when least preparation had been made to meet it. Later still, fear was sometimes replaced by a confidence no less excessive. 'It is impossible,' said Mr. Windham in the House of Commons, 1791, 'to deem them (the Roman Catholics) formidable at the present period, when the power of the Pope is considered as a mere spectre, capable of frightening only in the dark, and vanishing before the light of reason and knowledge.'[2]

Until the last decade of the century, Roman Catholics were rarely spoken of in any other spirit than as the dreaded enemies of Protestantism. There was very little recognition of their being far more nearly united to us by the tie of a common Christianity, than separated by the differences in it. A man who was not a professed sceptic needed to be both more unprejudiced and more courageous than his neighbours, to speak of Roman Catholics with tolerable charity. In this, as in many other points, Bishop Berkeley was superior to his age. He ventured to propose that Roman Catholics should be admitted to the Dublin College without being obliged to attend chapel or divinity lectures.[3] He could speak of such an institution as Monasticism in a discriminative tone which was then exceedingly uncommon. In Ireland he wisely accepted the fact that the Roman Catholic priests had the heart of the people, and shaped his conduct accordingly. His 'Word to the Wise' was an appeal addressed in 1749 to the priests, exhorting them to use their influence to promote industry and self-reliance among their congregations. This sort of Episcopal charge to the clergy of

[1] *Quarterly Review*, 89, 475.
[2] Id.
[3] *Berkeley's Life and Works*, ed. A. C. Fraser, iv. 213.

another Communion was received, it is said, with a no less cordial feeling than that in which it was written.[1]

Dr. Johnson, a man of a very different order of mind, may be mentioned as another who joined a devoted attachment to the Church of England with a candid and kindly spirit towards Roman Catholics. Perhaps his respect for authority, and the tinge of superstition in his temperament, predisposed him to sympathy. In any case, his masculine intellect brushed away with scorn the prejudices, exaggerations, and misconstructions which beset popular ideas upon the subject. He took pleasure in dilating upon the substantial unity that subsisted between them and denominations which, in externals, were separated from them by a very wide interval. 'There is a prodigious difference,' he would say, 'between the external form of one of your Presbyterian Churches in Scotland, and a Church in Italy; yet the doctrine taught is essentially the same.'[2]

Many of the speeches made in favour of relief, at the time of the Irish and English Emancipation Acts, were couched in terms which betoken a marked departure from the bitterness of tone which had long been customary. When the French Revolution broke out, the reaction became, for an interval, in many quarters far stronger still. In the presence of anti-Christian principles exultingly avowed, and triumphantly defiant, it seemed to many Christians that minor differences, which had seemed great before, dwindled almost into insignificance before the light of their common faith. Moreover, there was a widespread feeling of deep sympathy with the wrongs and sufferings of the proscribed clergy. 'Scruples about external forms,' said Bishop Horsley before the House of Lords, 'and differences of opinion upon controvertible points, cannot but take place among the best Christians, and dissolve not the fraternal tie; none, indeed, at this season are more entitled to our offices of love than those with whom the difference is wide in points of doctrine, discipline, and external rites,—those venerable exiles, the prelates and clergy of the fallen Church of France, endeared to us by the edifying example they exhibit of patient suffering for conscience sake.'[3] Horsley's words were far from meeting with universal approval. There were some fanatics, Hannah More tells us, who said it was a sin to oppose God's vengeance against Popery, and succour the priests who it was His will should starve. And real sympathy, even while the occasion of it lasted, was very often, as may well be imagined, mixed with feelings of apprehension. These refugees might be only too grateful. Thinking that salvation was obtainable only

[1] *Life and Works*, iv. 321.
[2] Boswell's *Johnson*, ii. 154, 101.
[3] Sermon, January 30, 1793.

in their own Church, was it not likely they would use their utmost art to extend this first of blessings to those who had so hospitably protected them? Thus interest was blended with anxiety in the nation which gave welcome to the emigrants. But interest there certainly was, and considerable abatement in the bitterness of earlier feeling.

The relations of the Church of England with other Reformed bodies abroad and at home had been, since James II.'s time, a question of high importance. Burnet justly remarks of the year 1685, that it was one of the most critical periods in the whole history of Protestantism. 'In February, a king of England declared himself a Papist. In June, Charles the Elector Palatine dying without issue, the Electoral dignity went to the house of Newburgh, a most bigoted Popish family. In October, the King of France recalled and vacated the Edict of Nantes. And in December, the Duke of Savoy, being brought to it not only by the persuasion, but even by the threatenings of the court of France, recalled the edict that his father had granted to the Vaudois.'[1] It cannot be said that the crisis was an unexpected one. The excited controversy which was being waged among theologians was but one sign of the general uneasiness that had been prevailing. 'The world,' writes one anonymous author in 1682, 'is filled with discourses about the Protestant religion and the professors of it; and not without cause.'[2] 'Who,' says another, 'can hold his peace when the Church, our mother, hath the Popish knife just at her throat!'[3] But the reverses of the Reformed faith abroad greatly increased the ferment, and began to kindle Protestant feeling into a state of enthusiastic fervour. When at last, in the next reign, war was proclaimed with Louis XIV., it was everywhere recognised as a great religious struggle, in which England had assumed her place as the champion of the Protestant interest.

From the very beginning of the Reformation it had been a vexed question how far the cause of the Reformed Church of England could be identified with that of other communions which had cast off the yoke of Rome. In dealing with this problem, a broad distinction had generally been made between Nonconformists at home and Protestant communities abroad. The relation of the English Church to Nonconformity may accordingly be considered separately. So long as it was a question of communion, more or less intimate, with foreign Churches, the intercourse was at all events not embarrassed with any difficulties

[1] Burnet's *Life and Works*, 420.
[2] *State and Fate of the Protestant Religion*, 1682, 3.
[3] *Endeavour for Peace*, &c. 1680, 15.

about schism. The preface to the Book of Common Prayer had expressly declared that 'In these our doings we condemn no other nations, nor prescribe anything but to our own people only. For we think it convenient that every country should use such ceremonies as they shall think best to the setting forth of God's honour and glory.' It was therefore acknowledged with very tolerable unanimity that friendly relationship with Protestant Churches on the Continent was by no means inconsistent with very considerable differences of custom and opinion. Men of all parties in the Church of England were ever inclined to allow great weight to the voice of constituted authority in matters which did not seem to them to touch the very life and substance of religion. Without taking this into consideration, it is impossible to form a right view of the comparative tenderness with which Churchmen passed over what they considered to be defects in reformed systems abroad which they condemned with much severity among Nonconformists at home.

The relations, however, of England with foreign Protestant bodies, though not exactly unfriendly, have been characterised by a good deal of reserve. The kinship has been acknowledged, and the right of difference allowed ; but belief in the great superiority of English uses, Nonconformist difficulties, and a certain amount of jealousy and intolerance, had always checked the advances which were sometimes made to a more cordial intimacy. In Henry VIII.'s time, in 1533, and again in 1535, overtures were made for a Fœdus Evangelicum, a league of the great reforming nations.[1] The differences between the German and the English Protestants were at that time very great, not only in details of discipline and government, but in the general spirit in which the Reformation in the two countries was being conducted. But an alliance of the kind contemplated would perhaps have been carried out had it not been for the bigotry which insisted upon signature of the Augsburg Confession. Queen Elizabeth was at one time inclined to join on behalf of England the Smalcaldic League of German Protestants, but the same obstacle intervened.[2] Cromwell is said to have cherished a great project of establishing a permanent Protestant Council, in which all the principal Reformed communities in Europe, and in the East and West Indies, would be represented under the name of provinces, and designs for the promotion of religion advanced and furthered in all parts of the world.[3] Such projects never had any important results. Statesmen, as well as theologians, often felt the need of

[1] Froude's *History of England*, ii. 405.
[2] Hallam's *Constitutional History*, i. 172, note.
[3] Burnet's *History of His Own Times*, 51.

strengthening the whole Protestant body by an organised harmony among its several members, something akin to that which gives the Roman Catholic Church so imposing an aspect of general unity. The idea was perhaps essentially impracticable, as requiring for its accomplishment a closer uniformity of thought and feeling than was either possible or desirable among Churches whose greatest conquest had been a liberty of thinking. As between England and Germany, one great impediment to a cordial understanding arose out of the differences between Lutheran and Reformed. So long as the English Church was under the guidance of Cranmer and Ridley, it was not clear to which of these two parties it most nearly approximated. In the reign of Edward VI. the Calvinistic element gained ground—a tendency as much resented by the one party abroad as it was welcomed by the other. The English clergymen who found a refuge in the Swiss and German cities were treated with marked neglect by the Lutherans, but received with great hospitality by the Calvinists.[1] At a later period, when Presbyterianism had for the time gained strong ground in England, the attitude had become somewhat reversed. The Reformed or Calvinistic section of German Protestants sided chiefly with the Presbyterians; the Lutherans with the English Churchmen.[2] In a word, notwithstanding all professions of more liberal sentiment, the hankering after an impossible uniformity was, on either side of the Channel, too strong to permit of cordial union or substantial unity. It was often admitted in theory, but not often in practice, that the principles of the Reformation must be left to operate with differences and modifications according to the varying circumstances of the countries in which they were adopted. Bucer and Peter Martyr, Calvin and Bullinger, made it almost a personal grievance that the English retained much which they themselves had cast aside.[3] Laud exhibited the same spirit in a more oppressive form when he insisted that, in spite of the guarantees given by Elizabeth and James I., no foreign Protestants should remain in England who would not conform to the established liturgy.[4]

No doubt the differences between the Reformed Churches of England and the Continent were very considerable. Yet, with the one discreditable exception just referred to, there had been much comity and friendliness in all personal relations between their respective members; and the absence of sympathy on many

[1] Hallam's *Constitutional History*, i. 171.
[2] *Life of Archbishop Sharp*, vol. ii. 186, App. 2.
[3] Hallam's *Constitutional History*, i. 102.
[4] Perry, G. G., *History of the Church of England*, i. 453.

points of doctrine and discipline was not so great as to preclude the possibility of closer union and common action in any crisis of danger. Before the end of the seventeenth century such a crisis seemed, in the opinion of many, to have arrived. The Protestant interest throughout Europe was in real peril. In England there was as much anxiety on the subject as was compatible with a period which was certainly not characterised by much moral purpose or deep feeling. The people as a mass were not just then very much in earnest about anything, but still they cared very really about their Protestantism. They were not assured of its security even within their own coasts; they knew that it was in jeopardy on the Continent. National prejudices against France added warmth to the indignation excited by the oppressions to which the Protestant subjects of the great monarch had been subjected. National pride readily combined with nobler impulses to create an enthusiasm for the idea that England was the champion of the whole Protestant cause.

There is nothing which tends to promote so kindly a feeling towards its objects as self-denying benevolence. This had been elicited in a very remarkable degree towards the refugees who found a shelter here after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Londoners beheld with a sort of humorous dismay the crowd of immigrants who came to settle among them.

> Hither for God's sake and their own they fled;
> Some for religion came, and some for bread.
> Four hundred thousand wooden pair of shoes,
> Who, God be thanked, had nothing left to lose,
> To heaven's great praise, did for religion fly,
> To make us starve our poor in charity.[1]

But these poverty-stricken exiles were received with warm-hearted sympathy. No previous brief had ever brought in such large sums as those which throughout the kingdom were subscribed for their relief; nor, if the increase of wealth be taken into account, has there been any greater display of munificence in our own times.[2] Churchmen of all views came generously forward. If here and there a doubt was raised whether these demonstrations of friendliness might not imply a greater approval of their opinions than really existed, compassion for sufferers who were not fellow-Christians only, but fellow-Protestants, quickly overpowered all such hesitation. Bishop Ken behaved in 1686 with all his accustomed generosity and boldness. In contravention of the King's orders, who had desired that the brief should

[1] De Foe's *True-born Englishman* (Ed. Chalmers' series), vol. xx. 19.
[2] Hallam's *Constitutional History*, iii. 55.

be simply read in churches without any sermon on the subject, he ventured in the Royal Chapel to set forth in affecting language the sufferings they had gone through, and to exhort his hearers to hold, with a like unswerving constancy, to the Protestant faith. He issued a pastoral entreating his clergy to do the utmost in their power for 'Christian strangers, whose distress is in all respects worthy of our tenderest commiseration.' For his own part, he set a noble example of liberality in the gift of a great part of 4000*l.* which had lately come into his possession.[1] We are told of Rainbow, Bishop of Carlisle, that in a similar spirit he gave to French Protestants large sums, and bore 'his share with other bishops in yearly pensions' to some of them.[2]

The burst of general sympathy evoked in favour of the French refugees happened just at a time when Churchmen of all views were showing a more or less hearty desire that the Church of England might be strengthened by the adhesion of many who had hitherto dissented from it. Sancroft was as yet at one with Tillotson in desiring to carry out a Comprehension Bill, and was asking Dissenters to join with him 'in prayer for an universal blessed union of all Reformed Churches at home and abroad.'[3] Undoubtedly there was a short interval, just before the Non-juring secession, in which the minds not only of the so-called Latitudinarians, but of many eminent High Churchmen, were strongly disposed to make large concessions for the sake of unity, and from a desire of seeing England definitely at the head of the Protestant cause alike in England and on the Continent. They could not but agree with the words of Samuel Johnson—as good and brave a man as the great successor to his name—that 'there could not be a more blessed work than to reconcile Protestants with Protestants.'[4] But the opportunity of successfully carrying into practice these aspirations soon passed away, and when it became evident that there could be no change in the relations of the English Church towards Nonconformity, interest in foreign Protestantism began to be much less universal than it had been. The clergy especially were afraid—and there was justification for their alarm—that some of the oldest and most characteristic features of their Church were in danger of being swept away. They had no wish to see in England a form of Protestantism nearly akin to that which existed in Holland. But there was a strong party in favour of changes which might have some such effect. The King, even under the new constitu-

[1] *Life of Bishop Ken*, by a Layman, 319–27.
[2] *Life of Rainbow*, 1688. Quoted in id. 326.
[3] Fleetwood's *Works*, 483.
[4] Birch's 'Life of Tillotson.'—*Works*, i. xciv.

tion, was still a power in the Church, and it was well known that the forms of the Church of England had no particular favour in his eyes. And therefore the Lower House of Convocation, representing, no doubt, the views of a majority of the clergy, while they professed, in 1689, that 'the interest of all the Protestant Churches was dear to them,' were anxious to make it very clear that they owned no close union with them.[1] There was a perplexity in the mode of expression which thoroughly reflected a genuine difficulty. As even the Highest Churchmen, at the opening of the eighteenth century, were vehemently Protestant, afraid of Rome, and exceedingly anxious to resist her with all their power, they could not help sharing to some extent in the general wish to make common cause with the Protestants abroad. On the other hand, there was much to repel anything like close intercourse. The points of difference were very marked. The English Church had retained Episcopacy. There was no party in the Church which did not highly value it; a section of High Churchmen reckoned it one of the essential notes of a true Church, and unchurched all communions that rejected it. The foreign Reformers, on the other hand, not, in some cases, without reluctance, and from force of circumstances, had discarded bishops. English Churchmen, again, almost universally paid great deference to the authority of the primitive fathers and early councils. The Reformed Churches abroad, under the leading of Daillé and others, no less generally depreciated them.[2] Nor could it be forgotten that the sympathies of those Churches had been with the Puritans during the Civil Wars, and that in tone of thought and mode of worship they bore, for the most part, a closer resemblance to English Nonconformity than to the English Church. Lastly, the Protestants of France and Switzerland were chiefly Calvinists, while in the Church of England Calvinism had for some length of time been rapidly declining. The bond of union had need to be strong, and the necessity of it keenly felt, if it was to prevail over the influences which tended to keep the English and foreign Reformed Churches apart.

Thus, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, while there was a very general wish that the English Church should take its place at the head of a movement which would aim at strengthening and consolidating the Protestant cause throughout Europe, there was much doubt how far such a project could be carried out consistently with the spirit and principles of the Church. The hopes of High Churchmen in this direction were based chiefly on

[1] Birch's 'Life of Tillotson.'—*Works*, i. cxxxv.
[2] J. J. Blunt's *Early Fathers*, 20.

the anticipation that the reformed churches abroad might perhaps be induced to restore Episcopacy. It was with this view that Dodwell wrote his 'Parænesis to Foreigners' in 1704. A year or two afterwards, events occurred in Prussia which made it seem likely that in that country the desired change would very speedily be made. Frederick I., at his coronation in 1700, had given the title of bishop to two of his clergy—one a Lutheran, the other Reformed. The former died soon after; but the latter, Dr. Ursinus, willingly co-operated with the King in a scheme for uniting the two communions on a basis of mutual assimilation to the Church of England. Ernestus Jablonski, his chaplain, a superintendent of the Protestant Church in Poland, zealously promoted the project. He had once been strongly prejudiced against the English Church; but his views on this point had altered during a visit to England, and he was now an admirer of it. By the advice of Ursinus and Jablonski, the King caused the English Liturgy to be translated into German. This was done at Frankfort on the Oder, where the English Church had many friends among the professors. Frederick then directed Ursinus to consult further with the Archbishop of Canterbury, and suggested that, if the plan was encouraged in England, the Liturgy should be introduced into the King's Chapel and the Cathedral Church on the 1st Sunday in Advent, 1706. It was to be left optional to other Churches to follow the example. After debate in the King's consistory, letters and copies of the version were sent to the Queen of England and to Archbishop Tenison. The former returned her thanks, but the primate appeared not to have received the communication; and the King, offended at the apparent slackness, allowed the matter to drop. Early, however, in 1709, communications were reopened. On January 14 of that year, the following entry occurs in Thoresby's 'Diary:' 'At the excellent Bishop of Ely's [Moore]. Met the obliging R. Hales, Esq., to whose pious endeavour the good providence of God has given admirable success in reconciling the Reformed Churches abroad [Calvinists and Lutherans] one to another (so that they not only frequently meet together, but some of them join in the Sacrament), and both of them to the Church of England; so that in many places they are willing to admit of Episcopacy, as I am creditably informed.'[1] The negotiations continued. Jablonski's recommendations were translated into English, and attracted considerable attention both in England and Prussia. They were promoted by many persons of eminence, especially by Archbishop Sharp, Bishop Smalridge (who thought

[1] Ralph Thoresby, *Diary*, ii. 22.

'the honour of our own Church and the edification of others much interested in the scheme'), Bishop Robinson and Lord Raby, ambassador at Berlin. Secretary St. John, afterwards Lord Bolingbroke, wrote to Raby in behalf of this 'laudable design,' informing him that the Queen was 'ready to give all possible encouragement to that excellent work,' and that if previous overtures had received a cold reception, yet that the clergy generally were zealous in the cause. Bonel, the Prussian king's minister in London, wrote in 1711 to Frederick that he thought the service of the Church of England was 'the most perfect, perhaps, that is among Protestants,' that conformity between the Prussian and English Churches would be received with great joy in England, but that the conformity desired related more to Church government than to any ritual or liturgy, and that Episcopacy was generally looked upon as the only apostolical and true ecclesiastical form of government. Later in the year, Jablonski placed in the hands of Baron Prinz his more matured 'Project for introducing Episcopacy into the King of Prussia's dominions.' Leibnitz engaged to interest the Electress of Hanover in the proposal. He was afraid, however, that the thirty-nine articles would be considered 'a little too much Geneva stamp' at Berlin. The negotiations continued, but the interest of the King had slackened; the proceedings of the Collegium Charitativum at Berlin, which sat under the presidency of Bishop Ursinus, were somewhat discredited by the wilder schemes started by Winkler, one of its chief members; the grave political questions debated at Utrecht diverted attention from ecclesiastical matters; Archbishop Sharp, who had taken an active part in the correspondence, became infirm; and the conferences were finally brought to a termination by the death, early in 1713, of Frederick I.[1] Frederick William's rough and contracted mind was far too much absorbed in the care of his giant regiment, and in the amassing of treasure, to feel the slightest concern in matters so entirely uncongenial to his temper as plans for the advancement of Church unity.

With the earlier years of the century all ideas of a closer relationship between English and foreign Protestantism than had existed heretofore passed away. The name of Protestant was still as cherished in popular feeling as ever it had been; but soon after the beginning of the Georgian period little was heard, as compared with what lately had been the case, of the Protestant cause or the Protestant interest. In truth, when minds were

[1] The full history of this correspondence is given in the *Life of Archbishop Sharp*, ed. Newcomb, i. 410–49.

no longer intent upon immediate dangers, the bond was severed which had begun to keep together, notwithstanding all differences, the Reformed Churches in England and on the Continent. A few leading spirits on either side had been animated by larger aspirations after Christian unity. But self-defence against aggressive Romanism had been the main support of all projects of combination. In the eighteenth century there was plenty of the monotonous indifferentism which bears a dreary superficial resemblance to unity, but there was very little in the prevalent tone of thought which was adapted to encourage its genuine growth. And even if it had been otherwise—if the National Church had ever so much widened and deepened its hold in England, and a sound, substantial unity had gained ground, such as gains strength out of the very differences which it contains—insular feeling would still, in all probability, have been too exclusive or uninformed to care much, when outward pressure was removed, for ties of sympathy which should extend beyond the Channel and include Frenchmen or Germans within their hold. Quite early in the century we find Fleetwood [1] and Calamy [2] complaining of a growing indifference towards Protestants abroad. A generation later this indifference had become more general. Parliamentary grants to 'poor French Protestant refugee clergy' and 'poor French Protestant laity' were made in the annual votes of supply almost up to the present reign,[3] but these were only items in the public charity; they no longer bore any significance.

In 1751 an Act was brought forward for the general naturalisation of foreign Protestants resident in England. Much interest had been felt in a similar Bill which had come before the House in 1709. But the promoters of the earlier measure had been chiefly animated by the sense of close religious affinity in those to whom the privilege was offered; and those who resisted it did so from a fear that it might tend to changes in the English Church of which they disapproved. At the later period these sympathies and these fears, so far as they existed at all, were wholly subordinate to other influences. The Bill was supported on the ground of the drain upon the population which had resulted from the late war; it was vehemently resisted from a fear that it would unduly encourage emigration, and have an unfavourable effect upon English labour.[4] Considerations less secular than these had little weight. Religious life was circulating but feebly in the Church and country generally; it had no

[1] *Works*, 368.
[2] *Life and Times*, ii. 368, 482.
[3] *Life of Ken*, by a Layman, 330.
[4] Mahon's *History of England*, chap. xxxi.

surplus energy to spare for sisterly interest in other communions outside the national borders.

The remarks that have been made in this chapter upon the relations of the English Church in the eighteenth century, especially in its earlier years, towards Rome on the one hand and the foreign Reformed Churches on the other, began with a reference to those principles of Church comprehensiveness which, however imperfectly understood, lay very near the heart of many distinguished Churchmen. But all who longed to see the Church of England acting in the free and generous spirit of a great national Church were well aware that there was a wider and more important field at home for the exercise of those principles. It was one, however, in which their course seemed far less plain. Many who were very willing to acknowledge that wide differences of opinion or practice constituted no insuperable bar to a close friendly intercourse between Churches of different countries, regarded those same variations in quite another light when considered as occasions of schism among separatists at home. Archbishop Sharp, for example, willingly communicated with congregations of foreign Protestants, wherever he might be travelling on the Continent, but could discuss no terms of conciliation with English Dissenters which were not based upon a relinquishment of Nonconformity. Liberty of opinion was not to be confused with needless infractions of Church unity.

The Latitudinarian party in the English Church had, almost without exception, a slight bias toward Puritan opinions. To them, the differences by which they were separated from moderate Nonconformists appeared utterly immaterial, and not worthy to be balanced for an instant against the blessings of unity. Hence while, on the one hand, they did their utmost to persuade the Dissenters to give up what seemed to them needless, and almost frivolous scruples, they were also very anxious that all ground for these scruples should be as far as possible removed. 'Sure,' they argued, ''tis not ill-becoming an elder (and so a wiser) brother in such a case as this to stoop a little to the weakness of the younger, in keeping company still; and when hereby he shall not go one step the further out of the ready road unto their Father's house.'[1] On points of Church order and discipline, mitigate the terms of uniformity, do not rigidly preclude all alternatives, admit some considered system which will allow room for option. Frankly acknowledge, that in regard of the doctrine of the sacraments, divers opinions may still, as has ever been the case, be legitimately held within the Church and modify here

[1] *Endeavour for Peace, &c.* 1680, 20.

and there an expression in the Liturgy, which may be thought inconsistent with their liberty, and gives needless offence. Let it not be in anywise our fault if our brethren in the same faith will not join us in our common worship. They appealed to the apostolic rule of Charity, that they who use this right despise not them who use it not; and those who use it not, condemn not them that use it. They appealed to the example of the primitive Church, and bade both Churchmen and Dissenters remember how both Polycarp and Irenæus had urged, that they who agree in doctrine must not fall out for rites. The early Church, said Stillingfleet,[1] showed great toleration towards different parties within its communion, and allowed among its members and ministers diverse rites and various opinions. They appealed again to the practice and constitution of the English Church since the Reformation. They did not so much ask to widen its limits, as that the limits which had previously been recognised should not now be restricted. There had always been parties in it which differed widely from one another, Anglican and Puritan, Calvinist and Arminian. There never had been a time when it had not included among its clergy men who differed in no perceptible degree from those who were now excluded. They appealed to the friendly feeling that prevailed between moderate men on either side; and most frequently and most urgently they appealed to the need of combination among Protestants. It was a time for mutual conciliation among Protestants in England and abroad, not for increasing divisions, and for imposing new tests and passwords which their fathers had not known. The National Church ought to make a great effort to win over a class of men who, as citizens, were prominent, for the most part, for sobriety, frugality, and industry, and, as Christians, for a piety which might perhaps be restricted in its ideas, and cramped by needless scruples, but which at all events was genuine and zealous. A very large number of them were as yet not disaffected towards the English Church, and would meet with cordiality all advances made in a brotherly spirit. It would be a sin to let the opportunity slip by unimproved.

The force of such arguments was vividly felt by the whole of that Latitudinarian party in the Church, which numbered at the end of the seventeenth century so many distinguished names. There was a time when some of the High Church leaders were so far alarmed by Roman aggressiveness, as to think that union among Protestants should be purchased even at what they deemed a sacrifice, and when Sancroft, Ken, and Lake moved for a bill of

[1] *Irenicum.* Hunt, ii. 136. *Endeavour &c.*, 22–7.

comprehension,[1] and Beveridge spoke warmly in favour of it.[2] The moderate Dissenters were quite as anxious on the subject as any of their conformist friends. 'Baxter protested in his latest works, that the body to which he belonged was in favour of a National State Church. He disavowed the term Presbyterian, and stated that most whom he knew did the same. They would be glad, he said, to live under godly bishops, and to unite on healing terms. He deplored that the Church doors had not been opened to him and his brethren, and pleaded urgently for a "healing Act of Uniformity." Calamy explicitly states that he was disposed to enter the establishment, if Tillotson's scheme had succeeded. Howe also lamented the failure of the scheme.'[3] The trusts of their meeting-houses were in many instances so framed, and their licences so taken out, that the buildings could easily be transferred to Church uses.[4] The Independents, who came next to the Presbyterians, both in influence and numerical strength, were more divided in opinion. Many remained staunch to the principles of their early founders, and were wholly irreconcilable.[5] Others, perhaps a majority, of the 'Congregational Brethren,' as they preferred to call themselves, were very willing to 'own the king for head over their churches,' to give a general approval to the Prayer Book, and to be comprehended, on terms which would allow them what they considered a reasonable liberty, within the National Church.[6] They formed part of the deputation of ministers to King William, by whom an ardent hope was expressed that differences might be composed, and such a firm union established on broad Christian principles 'as would make the Church a type of heaven.'[7] How far they would have accepted any practical scheme of comprehension is more doubtful. But, as Mr. Skeats remarks of the measure proposed in 1689, 'Calamy's assertion, that if it had been adopted, it would in all probability have brought into the Church two-thirds of the Dissenters, indicates the almost entire agreement of the Independents with the Presbyterians, concerning the expedience of adopting it.'[8]

The Baptists showed little or no disposition to come to an agreement with the Church. They were at this time a declining

[1] Burnet's *Own Times*, 528. Birch's *Life of Tillotson*, cix. *Life of Ken*, by a Layman, 501. Hunt, *Religious Thought*, ii. 70.

[2] Macaulay's *History of England*, chap. xiv.

[3] Skeats, 147.

[4] Id. 166.

[5] Hallam's *Constitutional History of England*, ii. 317. Hunt, *Religious Thought in England*, i. 213.

[6] Hunt, *Religious Thought in England*, ii. 22.

[7] Skeats' *History of the Free Churches*, 147.

[8] Calamy's *Baxter*, 655 (quoted by Skeats), 149. Thoresby's *Diary*, 399.

sect, who held little intercourse with other Dissenters, and were much engaged in petty but very acrimonious controversies among themselves. They had been divided ever since 1633 into two sections, the Particular and General Baptists. The former of the two were Calvinists of the most rigorous and exclusive type, often conspicuous by a fervent but excessively narrow form of piety, and illiterate almost on principle on account of their disparagement of what was called 'human learning.'[1] The General Baptists, many of whom merged, early in the eighteenth century, into Unitarians, were less exclusive in their views. But the Baptists generally viewed the English Church with suspicion and dislike. In many cases their members were forbidden to enter, an any pretext whatever, the national churches, or to form intermarriages or hold social intercourse with Churchmen.[2] Yet some may not have forgotten the example and teaching of the ablest defender, in the seventeenth century, of Baptist opinions. 'Mr. Tombs,' says Wall, quoting from Baxter, 'continued an Antipædobaptist to his dying day, yet wrote against separation for it, and for communion with the parish churches.'[3] When Marshall, in the course of controversy, reproached the Baptists with separation, Tombs answered that he must blame the persons, not the general body. For his own part he thought such separation a 'practice justly to be abhorred. The making of sects upon difference of opinions, reviling, separating from their teachers and brethren otherwise faithful, because there is not the same opinion in disputable points, or in clear truths not fundamental, is a thing too frequent in all sorts of dogmatists, &c., and I look upon it as one of the greatest plagues of Christianity. You shall have me join with you in detestation of it.'[4] He himself continued in communion with the National Church until his death.

Unitarians have always differed from one another so very widely, that they can hardly be classed or spoken of under one name. Their opinions have always varied in every possible degree, from such minute departure from generally received modes of expression in speaking of the mystery of the Godhead, as needs a very microscopic orthodoxy to detect, down to the barest and most explicit Socinianism. There were some who charged with Unitarianism Bishop Bull,[5] whose learned defence of the Nicene faith was famous throughout all Europe. There were many who made it an accusation against Tillotson,[6] and the whole[7] of the

[1] Skeats, 158–65. [2] Id. 186. [3] Wall's *Dissuasive from Schism*, 477.
[4] *Tombs against Marshall*, p. 31, quoted by Wall.
[5] Nelson's *Life of Bull*, 240, 260.
[6] Birch's *Tillotson*, ccvii. Leslie's *Works*, ii. 533–600, &c.
[7] Leslie, ii. 659.

Low or Latitudinarian party in the Church of England. The Roman Controversialists of the seventeenth century used to go further still, and boldly assert [1] that to leave Rome was to go to Socinianism; and the Calvinists, on their side, would sometimes argue that 'Arminianism was a shoeing horn to draw on Socinianism.' [2] A great number of the Unitarians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were themselves scarcely distinguishable from the orthodox. 'For peace sake they submit to the phrase of the Church, and expressly own Three Persons, though they think the word person not so proper as another might be. If the Three Persons should be defined by three distinct minds and spirits, or substances, the Unitarian will be lost; but if person be defined by mode, manifestation, or outward relation, he will be acquitted . . . . They believe all the articles of the Apostles' Creed . . . . They believe the law of Christ contained in the four gospels to be the only and everlasting rule, by which they shall be judged hereafter . . . . They thankfully lay hold of the message of Redemption through Christ.' [3] Some of the Unitarians, we are told, even excommunicated and deposed from the ministry such of their party as denied that divine worship was due to Christ.[4] Of Unitarians such as these, if they can be called by that name, and not rather Arians or Semi-Arians, the words of Dr. Arnold may properly be quoted: 'The addressing Christ in the language of prayer and praise is an essential part of Christian worship. Every Christian would feel his devotions incomplete, if this formed no part of them. This therefore cannot be sacrificed; but we are by no means bound to inquire whether all who pray to Christ entertain exactly the same ideas of His nature. I believe that Arianism involves in it some very erroneous notions as to the object of religious worship; but if an Arian will join in our worship of Christ, and will call Him Lord and God, there is neither wisdom nor charity in insisting that he shall explain what he means by these terms; nor in questioning the strength and sincerity of his faith in his Saviour, because he makes too great a distinction between the Divinity of the Father and that which he allows to be the attribute of the Son.' [5] This was certainly the feeling of Tillotson [6] and many other eminent men of the same school. If an Unitarian chose to conform, as very many are accustomed to do, they gladly received him as a fellow worshipper.

[1] Chillingworth's *Works*, vol. i. Preface, § 9.
[2] *The Principles of the Reformation concerning Church Communion*, 1704.
[3] *An Apology for the Parliament, &c.*, 1697, part i.
[4] Leslie's *Works*, ii. 656.
[5] Dr. Arnold, *Principles of Church Reform*, 285.
[6] Birch's *Life of Tillotson*, ccxxvii.

Thomas Firmin the philanthropist, leader of the Unitarians of his day was a constant attendant at Tillotson's church of St. Lawrence Jewry, and at Dr. Outram's in Lombard Street. Yet both these divines were Catholic in regard of the doctrine of the Trinity, and wrote in defence of it. In fact, the moderate Unitarians conformed without asking or expecting any concessions. Latitudinarian Churchmen, as a party, entertained no idea of including Unitarians in the proposed act of comprehension. For his own part, said Burnet, he could never understand pacificatory doctrines on matters which seemed to him the fundamentals of Christianity.[1] So far from comprehension, Socinians were excluded even from the benefits of the act of toleration; and more than thirty years later, in 1697, a severe Act of outlawry was passed against all who wrote or spoke against the divinity of Christ.[2] Until about 1720, Unitarians scarcely took the form of a separate sect. Either they were scarcely distinguishable from those who professed one or another form of Deism, and who assumed the title of a Christian philosophy rather than of a denomination; or they were proscribed heretics; or they conformed to the Church of England and did not consider their opinions inconsistent with loyalty to it.

Little need be said, in this connexion, of the Quakers. Towards the end of the seventeenth century they increased in wealth and numbers, and had begun to hold far more mitigated tenets than those of a previous age. For this they were much indebted to Robert Barclay, who wrote his 'Apology' in Latin in 1676, and translated it with a dedication to Charles II. in 1678. A few Churchmen of pronounced mystical opinions were to some extent in sympathy with them; but, as a rule, both among Conformists and Nonconformists they were everywhere misunderstood, ridiculed, and denounced. If it had not been so, their vehement repudiation of all intervention of the State in religious matters would have compelled them to hold aloof from all overtures of comprehension, even if any had been proffered to them.

The Nonconformists, therefore, who in the latter part of the seventeenth century might have been attached by a successful measure of comprehension to the National Church, were the Presbyterians—at that time a large and influential body—a considerable proportion, probably, of the Independents, and individual members of other denominations. The most promising, though not the best known scheme, appears to have been that put forward by the Presbyterians, and earnestly promoted by Sir Matthew Hale, Bishop Wilkins, and others, in 1667. Assent

[1] Burnet's *Four Discourses to the Clergy of Sarum*, 1694, Pref. v.
[2] Skeats, 185.

only was to be required to the Prayer Book ; certain ceremonies were to be left optional ; clergymen who had received only Presbyterian ordination were to receive, with imposition of the bishop's hands, legal authority to exercise the offices of their ministry, the word 'legal' being considered a sufficient salvo for the intrinsic validity of their previous orders ; 'sacramentally' might be added after 'regenerated' in the Baptismal service, and a few other things were to be made discretional. Here was a very tolerable basis for an agreement which might not improbably have been carried out, if the House of Commons had not resolved to pass no bill of comprehension in that year.

Even this scheme, however, had one essential fault common to it with the projects which were brought forward at a somewhat later period. No measure for Church comprehension on anything like a large scale is ever like to fulfil its objects, unless the whole of the question with all its difficulties is boldly grasped and dealt with in a statesmanlike manner. Nonconformist bodies, which have grown up by long and perhaps hereditary usage into fixed habits and settled frames of thought, or whose strength is chiefly based upon principles and motives of action which are not quite in accordance with the spirit of the larger society, can never be satisfactorily incorporated into a National Church, unless the scheme provides to a great extent for the affiliation and maintenance in their integrity of the existing organisations. The Roman Church has never hesitated to utilise in this sort of manner new spiritual forces, and, without many alterations of the old, to make new additions to her ecclesiastical machinery at the risk of increasing its complexity. The Church of England might in this respect have followed the example of her old opponent to very great advantage. But neither in the plan of 1689, nor in any of those which preceded or followed it during the period which elapsed between the Act of Uniformity and the close of the century, was anything of the kind attempted.

Much, no doubt, could be done and was proposed to be done, in the way of removing from public services, where other words, not less to the purpose and equally devotional, could be substituted for them, some expressions which gave offence and raised scruples. Where this can be done without loss, it must needs be a gain. A concession to scruples which in no way impairs our perception of Christian truth, is a worthy sacrifice to Christian charity. Such a work, however, of revision demands much caution and an exceptional amount of sound discretion. Least of all it can be done in any spirit of party. In proposing a change of expression which would be in itself wholly unobjectionable, the revisers have not only to consider the scruples of

those whom they wish to conciliate; they must respect even more heedfully, feelings and sentiments which they may not themselves share in, but which are valued by one or another party already existing in the Church. A revision conducted by the moderates of a Church would plainly have no right to meet scruples and objections on the part of Puritans, outside their Communion, only by creating new scruples and objections among High Churchmen within it; just as, reversely, it would be equally unjustifiable to conciliate High Sacramentalists, or the lovers of a grander or more touching ceremonial, who hovered on the borders of a Church, by changes which would be painful to its Puritan members already domiciled within it. When men of all the leading parties in a Church are sincerely desirous (as they ought, and, under such contingencies, are specially bound to be,) of removing unnecessary obstacles to Church Communion, the work of revision will be comparatively easy; and changes, which to unwilling minds would be magnified into alarming sacrifices, will become peace offerings uncostly in themselves, and willingly and freely yielded. Much then can be done in this way, but only where the changes, however excellent and opportune in themselves, are promoted not merely by a party, but by the Church in general.

Alterations, however, of this kind, although they may constitute a very important part of a measure of Church comprehension, will rarely, if ever, prove sufficient to fulfil in any satisfactory manner the desired purpose. It would be simply ruinous to the vitality of any Church to be neutral and colourless in its formularies. Irritating and polemical terms may most properly be excluded from devotional use; but no Church or party in a Church which has life and promise in it will consent, in order to please others, to give up old words and accustomed usages which give distinctiveness to worship and add a charm to the expression of familiar doctrines.

One, therefore, of two things must be done as a duty both to the old and to the incoming members. Either much must be left optional to the clergy, or to the clergy acting in concert with their congregations, or else, as was before said, the National Church must find scope and room for its new members, not as a mere throng of individuals, but as corporate bodies, whose organisations may have to be modified to suit the new circumstances, but not broken up. When it is considered how highly strict uniformity was valued by the ruling powers at the end of the seventeenth century, the ample discretionary powers that were proposed to be left are a strong proof how genuine in many quarters must have been the wish to effect a comprehension.

The difficulties, however, which beset such liberty of option were obvious, and the opponents of the bill did not fail to make the most of them. It was a subject which specially suited the satirical pen and declamatory powers of Dr. South. He was a great stickler for uniformity; unity, he urged, was strength; and therefore he insisted upon 'a resolution to keep all the constitutions of the Church, the parts of the service, and the conditions of its communion entire, without lopping off any part of them.' 'If any be indulged in the omission of the least thing there enjoined, they cannot be said to "speak all the same thing."' And then, in more forcible language, he descanted upon what he called 'the deformity and undecency' of difference of practice. He drew a vivid picture how some in the same diocese would use the surplice, and some not, and how there would be parties accordingly. 'Some will kneel at the Sacrament, some stand, some perhaps sit; some will read this part of the Common Prayer, some that—some, perhaps, none at all.' Some in the pulpits of our churches and cathedrals 'shall conceive a long crude extemporary prayer, in reproach of all the prayers which the Church with such admirable prudence and devotion hath been making before. Nay, in the same cathedral you shall see one prebendary in a surplice, another in a long coat, another in a short coat or jacket; and in the performance of the public services some standing up at the Creed, the Gloria Patri, and the reading of the Gospel; and others sitting, and perhaps laughing and winking upon their fellow schismatics, in scoff of those who practise the decent order of the Church.' Irreconcilable parties, he adds, and factions will be created. 'I will not hear this formalist, says one; and I will not hear that schismatic (with better reason), says another. . . . So that I dare avouch, that to bring in a comprehension is nothing else but, in plain terms, to establish a schism in the Church by law, and so bring a plague into the very bowels of it, which is more than sufficiently endangered already by having one in its neighbourhood; a plague which shall eat out the very heart and soul, and consume the vitals and spirit of it, and this to such a degree, that in the compass of a few years it shall scarce have any being or subsistence, or so much as the face of a National Church to be known by.'[1] South's sermon was on the appropriate text, 'not give place, no, not for an hour.' His picture was doubtless a highly exaggerated one. The discretionary powers which some of the schemes of comprehension proposed to give would not have left the Church of England a mere scene of confusion, an unseemly Babel of

[1] R. South's *Sermons*, vol. iv. 174–95.

anarchy and licence. A sketch might be artfully drawn, in which nothing should be introduced but what was truthfully selected from the practices of different London Churches of the present day, which might easily make a foreigner imagine that in the National Church uniformity and order were things unknown. Yet practically, its unity remains unbroken; and the inconveniences arising from such divergences are very slight as compared with the advantages which result from them, and with the general life and elasticity of which they are at once both causes and symptoms. Good feeling, sound sense, and the natural instinct of order would have done much to abate the disorders of even a large relaxation of the Act of Uniformity. In 1689, before yet the course taken by the Revolution had kindled the strong spirit of party, there was nothing like the heat of feeling in regard of such usages as the wearing of the surplice, kneeling at the Communion, and the sign of the cross at Baptism, as there had been in the earlier part of Elizabeth's reign. When prejudices began to pass away, prevailing practice would probably have been guided, after an interval, by the rule of the 'survival of the fittest,'—of those customs, that is, which best suited the temper of the people and the spirit of the Church. The surplice, for instance, would very likely have become gradually universal, much in the same manner as in our own day it has gradually superseded the gown in the pulpit. A concession to Nonconformist scruples of some discretionary power in regard of a few ceremonies and observances would certainly not have brought upon the National Church the ruin foreboded by Dr. South. Possibly a licensed variety of usage might have had indirectly a somewhat wholesome influence. The mild excitement of controversies about matters in themselves almost indifferent might have tended, like a gentle blister, to ward off the lethargy which, in the eighteenth century, paralysed to so great an extent the spiritual energies of the Church. No one can doubt that Dr. South's remarks expressed in vigorous language genuine difficulties. But it was equally obvious that if the National Church were to be laced on a wider basis, as the opportunities of the time seemed to demand, a relaxation of uniformity of some kind or another was indispensable. It did not seem to occur to the reformers and revisionists of the time that a concession of optional powers was a somewhat crude, nor by any means the only solution of the difficulty; and that it might be quite possible to meet all reasonable scruples of Nonconformists without in any way infringing upon customs which all old members of the Church of England were well satisfied to retain.

But even if the schemes for comprehension had been

thoroughly sound in principle, and less open to objection, the favourable opportunity soon passed by. While there yet lingered in men's minds a feeling of uneasiness and regret that the Restoration of 1660 should have been followed by the ejection of so many deserving clergy; while the more eminent and cultured of the sufferers by it were leavening the whole Nonconformist body with principles and sentiments which belong rather to a National Church than to a detached sect; while Nonconformity among large bodies of Dissenters was not yet an established fact; while men of all parties were still rejoicing in the termination of civil war, in the conspicuous abatement of religious and political animosities, and in the sense of national unity; while Protestants of all shades of opinion were knit together by the strong band of a common danger, by the urgent need of combination against a foe whose advances threatened the liberties of all; while High Churchmen like Ken and Sancroft were advocating not toleration only, but comprehension; while the voices of Nonconformists joined heartily in the acclamations which greeted the liberation of the seven bishops; while the Upper House of Convocation was not yet separated from the Lower, nor the great majority of the bishops from the bulk of the clergy, by a seemingly hopeless antagonism of Church principles; while High Churchmen were still headed by bishops distinguished by their services to religion and liberty; and while Broad Churchmen were represented not only by eminent men of the type of Stillingfleet and Tillotson, Burnet, Tenison and Compton, but by the thoughtful and philosophic band of scholars who went by the name of the Cambridge Platonists—under circumstances such as these, there was very much that was highly favourable to the efforts which were being made in favour of Church comprehension. These efforts met at all times with strong opposition, especially in the House of Commons and among the country clergy. But a well-considered scheme, once carried, would have been welcomed with very general approval, and might have been attended with most beneficial results.

The turn taken by the Revolution of 1688 destroyed the prospect of bringing these labours to a really successful issue. They were pushed on, as is well known, with greater energy than ever. They could not, however, fail of being infected henceforth with a partisan and political spirit which made it very doubtful whether the ill consequences of an Act of Comprehension would not have more than counterbalanced its advantages. The High Church party, deprived of many of their best men by the secession of the Nonjurors, and suspected by a triumphant majority of Jacobitism and general disaffection, were weakened, narrowed, and

embittered. Broad Churchmen, on the other hand, were looked upon by those who differed from them as altogether Latitudinarians in religion, and Whigs in politics—terms constantly used as practically convertible. Danger from Rome, although by no means insignificant, was no longer so visible, or so pressing, as it had been in James II.'s reign. Meanwhile, it had become apparent that the Church of England was menaced by a peril of an opposite kind. Not High Churchmen only, but all who desired to see the existing character of the Church of England maintained, had cause to fear lest under a monarch to whom all forms of Protestantism were alike, and who regarded all from a political and somewhat sceptical point of view, ideas very alien to those which had given the National Church its shape and colour might now become predominant. If the Royal Supremacy was no longer the engine of power it had been under some previous rulers, and up to the very era of the Revolution, the personal opinions of the sovereign still had considerable weight, especially when backed, as they now were, by a strong mass of opinion, both within the English Church, and among Nonconformists. There were many persons who drew back with apprehension from measures which a year or two before they had looked forward to with hope. They knew not what they might lead to. Salutary changes might be the prelude to others which they would witness with dismay. Moreover, changes which might have been salutary under other circumstances, would entirely lose their character when they were regarded as the triumph of a party and caused distrust and alienation. They might create a wider schism than any they could heal. The Nonjuring separation was at present a comparatively inconsiderable body in numbers and general influence; and there was a hope, proved in the issue to be well founded, that many of the most respected members of it would eventually return to the communion which they had unwillingly quitted. The case would be quite reversed, if multitudes of steady, old-fashioned Churchmen, disgusted by concessions and innovations which they abhorred and regarded as mere badges of a party triumph, came to look upon the communion of Ken and Kettlewell and Nelson as alone representing that Church of their forefathers to which they had given their attachment. It would be a disastrous consequence of efforts pressed inopportunely in the interests of peace if the ancient Church of England were rent in twain.

Thus, before the eighteenth century had yet begun, the hopes which had been cherished by so many excellent men on either side of the line which marked off the Nonconformists from their conforming friends, had at length almost entirely vanished. The

scheme of 1689, well-meaning as it was, lacked in a marked degree many of the qualities which most deserve and command success. But when once William and Mary had been crowned, and the spirit of party had become strong, the best of schemes would have failed.

Church comprehension never afterwards became, in any direct form, a question for much practical discussion. The interest which the late efforts had excited lingered for some time in the minds, both of those who had promoted the measure and of those who had resisted it. There was much warm debate upon the subject in the Convocation of 1702. Sacheverell and the bigots of his party in 1709 lashed themselves into fury at the very thought that comprehension could be advocated. It was treachery, rank and inexcusable ; it was bringing the Trojan horse into the Holy City ; it was converting the House of God into a den of thieves.[1] Such forms of speech were too common just about that period to mean much, or to attract any particular notice. As Swift said, if the zealots of either party were to be believed, their adversaries were always wretches worthy to be exterminated.[2] Party spirit, at this period, ran so high, both in political and ecclesiastical matters, and minds were so excited and suspicious, that most men ranged themselves very definitely on one or another side of a clearly-marked line, and genuinely temperate counsels were much out of favour. To the one party 'moderation,' that 'harmless, gilded name,'[3] had become wholly odious, as ever 'importing somewhat that was unkind to the Church, and that favoured the Dissenters.'[4] There was a story that 'a clergyman preaching upon the text, "Let your moderation be known unto all men," took notice that the Latin word "moderor" signified rule and government, and by virtue of the criticism he made his text to signify, let the severity of your government be known unto all men.'[5] Yet it was not to be wondered at that they had got to hate the word. The opposite party, adopting moderation jointly with union as their password, and glorifying it as 'the cement of the world,' 'the ornament of human kind,' 'the chiefest Christian grace,' 'the peculiar characteristic of this Church,'[6] would pass on almost in the same breath to pile upon their opponents indiscriminate charges of persecution, priestcraft, superstition, and to inveigh against them as 'a narrow Laudean faction,' 'a jealous-headed, unneighbourly, selfish sect of Ishmaelites.'[7] Evidently, so long as the spirit of party was thus

[1] Sermon of November 5, 1709. Hunt, 3, 12. [2] *Works*, vol. 8, 264.
[3] South's *Sermons*, iv. 227.
[4] Burnet's *Own Times*, 751. Hoadly's *Works*, i. 24.
[5] *A Brief Defence of the Church*, 1706. [6] Id. [7] Id.

rampant, any measure of Church comprehension was entirely out of question. Many Low Churchmen were as anxious for it as ever. But they were no longer in power; and had they been a majority, they could only have effected it by sheer weight of numbers, and under imminent peril of disrupture in the Church. Therefore, they did not even attempt it, and were content to labour toward the same ends by more indirect means.

In the middle of the century—at a time when, except among the Methodists, religious zeal seemed almost extinct, and when (to use Walpole's words) 'religious animosities were out of date, and the public had no turn for controversy'—thoughts of comprehension revived both in the English Church and among the Nonconformists.

'Those,' wrote Mosheim in 1740, 'who are best acquainted with the state of the English nation, tell us that the Dissenting interest declines from day to day, and that the cause of Nonconformity owes this gradual decay in a great measure to the lenity and moderation that are practised by the rulers of the Established Church.'[1] No doubt the friendly understanding which widely existed about this time between Churchmen and Dissenters contributed to such a result. Herring, for instance, of Canterbury, Sherlock of London, Secker of Oxford, Maddox of Worcester, as well as Warburton, who was then preacher at Lincoln's Inn, Hildersley afterwards Bishop of Sodor and Man, and many other eminent Churchmen,[2] were all friends or correspondents with Doddridge, the genial and liberal-minded leader of the Congregationalists, the devout author of 'The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul.' Much the same might be said of Samuel Chandler, the eminent Presbyterian minister. An old schoolfellow of Secker and Butler, when they were pupils together at a dissenting academy in Yorkshire, he kept up his friendship with them, when the one was Primate of the English Church, and the other its ablest theologian. Personal relations of this kind insured the recognition of approaches based on more substantial grounds. There was real friendly feeling on the part of many principal Nonconformists not only towards this or that bishop, this or that Churchman, but towards the English Church in general. They coveted its wider culture, its freer air. With the decline of prejudices and animosities, they could not but feel the insignificance of the differences by which they were separated from it. Many of them were by no means unfavourable to the principle of a National Church. This was especially the case with Doddridge.

[1] Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History* (Maclaine's Trans.), 5, 95.
[2] Hunt, 3, 247.

While he spoke with the utmost abhorrence of all forms of persecution, he argued that regard alike to the honour of God and to the good of society, should engage rulers to desire and labour that the people should be instructed in matters of religion, and that they could not be thus instructed without some public provision. He held, however, that such an establishment should be as large as possible, so that no worthy or good man, whose services could be of use, should be excluded. If the majority agreed in such an establishment, the minority, he thought, might well be thankful to be left in possession of their liberties. He did not see that it was more unfair that they should be called upon to assist in supporting such a Church, than that they should have to contribute to the expenses of a war or any other national object of which they might disapprove.[1] It must be added that the Nonconformists of that time were drawn towards the National Church not only by its real merits. They were in very many instances attracted rather than repelled, by what was then its greatest defect, for it was a defect which prevailed no less generally among themselves than in it. A stiff and cold insistence upon morals and reasonable considerations, to the comparative exclusion of appeals to higher Christian motive, was the common vice of Nonconformist as well as of national pulpits. At a time, therefore, when the great cardinal doctrines of Christianity were insufficiently preached, it followed as a matter of course that differences of opinion upon religious questions of less moment dwindled in seeming importance.

Such was the frequent relation between the English Church and Dissent when a charge happened to be delivered by Gooch, Bishop of Norwich, which gave rise to some remonstrance on the part of Dr. Chandler, who had been one of his auditors. Correspondence resulted in an interview, in which Gooch, though generally considered a High Churchman, showed himself not unfavourable to comprehension. Another time Bishop Sherlock joined in the discussion. There were three points, he said, to be considered—Doctrine, Discipline, and Ceremonies. Discipline was already in too neglected and enfeebled a state, too much in need of being recast, to be suggestive of much difficulty. Ceremonies could be left indifferent. As for doctrine, both bishops were quite willing to agree with Dr. Chandler that the Articles might properly be expressed in Scripture words, and that the Athanasian Creed should be discarded. Chandler, for his part, thought that dissenting clergy would consent to a form of Episcopal ordination if it did not suggest any invalidity in pre-

[1] Doddridge's *Works*, iv. 503–4.

vious orders. Archbishop Herring was then consulted. The Primate had already had a long conversation with Doddridge on the subject, and had fallen in with Doddridge's suggestion, that, as a previous step, an occasional interchange of pulpits between Churchmen and Dissenters might be desirable. He thought comprehension 'a very good thing;' he wished it with all his heart, and considered that there was some hope of its success. He believed most of the bishops agreed with him in these opinions.

No practical results ensued upon these conversations. They are interesting, and to some extent they were characteristic of the time. It is not known whether Herring and his brethren on the Episcopal bench suggested any practical measure of the kind to the Ministry then in power. If they had done so, the suggestion would have met with no response. 'I can tell you,' said Warburton, 'of certain science, that not the least alteration will be made in the Ecclesiastical system. The present ministers were bred up under, and act entirely on, the maxims of the last. And one of the principal of theirs was, Not to stir what is at rest.'[1] Pelham was a true disciple of Sir Robert Walpole, without his talent and without his courage—a man whose main political object was to glide quietly with the stream, and who trembled at the smallest eddies.[2] He was the last man to give a moment's countenance to any such scheme, if it were not loudly called for by a large or powerful section of the community. This was far from being the case. Indifference was too much the prevailing spirit of the age to allow more than a very negative kind of public feeling in such a matter. A carefully planned measure, not too suggestive of any considerable change, would have been acquiesced in by many, but enthusiastically welcomed by very few, while beyond doubt there would have been much vehement opposition to it.

Or, if circumstances had been somewhat different, and Herring and Sherlock, Doddridge and Chandler, had seen their plans extensively advocated, and carried triumphantly through Parliament, the result would in all probability have been a disappointing one. It would infallibly have been a slipshod comprehension. Carelessness and indifference would have had a large share in promoting it; relaxation, greater than even then existed, of the order of the Church, would have been a likely consequence. The National Church was not in a sufficiently healthy and vigorous condition to conduct with much prospect of

[1] Doddridge's *Correspondence*, v. 167. Perry's *Church History*, 3, 377.
[2] Lord Mahon's *History*, chap. 31.

success an enlarged organisation, or to undertake, in any hopeful spirit, new and wider responsibilities. Nor would accessions from the Dissenting communities have infused much fresh life into it. They were suffering themselves under the same defect; all the more visibly because a certain vigour of self-assertion seemed necessary to justify their very existence as separatist bodies. The Presbyterians were rapidly losing their old standing, and were lapsing into the ranks of Unitarianism. A large majority of the general Baptists were adopting similar views. The ablest men among the Congregationalists were devoting themselves to teaching rather than to pastoral work. Unitarianism was the only form of dissent that was gaining in numbers and influence. The more orthodox denominations were daily losing in numbers and influence, and were secluding themselves more and more from the general thought and culture of the age.

After all, the greatest question which arose in the eighteenth century in connection with Church Comprehension was that which related to the Methodist movement. Not that the word 'Comprehension' was ever used in the discussion of it. In its beginnings, it was essentially an agitation which originated within the National Church, and one in which the very thought of secession was vehemently deprecated. As it advanced, though one episcopal charge after another was levelled against it; though pulpit after pulpit was indignantly refused to its leaders; though it was on all sides preached against, satirised, denounced; though the voices of its preachers were not unfrequently drowned in the clanging of church bells; though its best features were persistently misunderstood and misrepresented, and all its defects and weaknesses exposed with a merciless hand, Wesley, with the majority of his principal supporters, never ceased to declare his love for the Church of England, and his hearty loyalty to its principles. 'We do not,' he said, 'we dare not, separate from the service of the Church. We are not seceders, nor do we bear any resemblance to them.' And when one of his bitterest opponents charged him with 'stabbing the Church to her very vitals,' 'Do I, or you,' he retorted, 'do this! Let anyone who has read her Liturgy, Articles, and Homilies, judge. . . . You desire that I should disown the Church. But I choose to stay in the Church, were it only to reprove those who betray her with a kiss.'[1] He stayed within it to the last, and on his deathbed, in 1791, he implored his followers even yet to refrain from secession.

Comprehension had always related to Dissenters. The term, therefore, could hardly be used in reference to men who claimed

[1] 'Answer to Bailey,' 1750,—*Works*, vol. ix. 83.

to be thorough Churchmen, who attended the services of the Church, loved its Liturgy, and willingly subscribed to all its formularies. The Methodist Societies bore a striking resemblance to the Collegia Pietatis established in Germany by Spener about 1670, which, at all events in their earlier years, simply aimed at the promotion of Christian holiness, while they preserved allegiance to the ecclesiastical order of the day ;[1] or we may be reminded of that Moravian community, by which the mind of Wesley was at one time so deeply fascinated, whose ideal, as Matter has observed, was to be 'Calviniste ici, Luthérienne là, Catholique partout par ses institutions épiscopales et ses doctrines ascétiques, et pourtant avant tout Chrétienne, et vraiment apostolique par ses missions.'[2] 'At a very early period of the renewed Moravian Church,' writes the translator of Schleiermacher's Letters, 'invitations were sent from various quarters of Europe for godly men to labour in the National Churches. These men did not dispense the Sacraments, but visited, prayed, read the Bible, and kept meetings for those who, without leaving the National Churches, sought to be "built up in communion" with right-minded pious persons.'[3] These words are exactly parallel to what Wesley wrote in one of his earlier works, and requoted in 1766. 'We look upon ourselves not as the authors or ringleaders of a particular sect or party, but as messengers of God to those who are Christians in name, but heathens in heart and life, to lead them back to that from which they are fallen, to real genuine Christianity.'[4] His followers, he added, in South Britain, belong to the Church of England, in North Britain to the Church of Scotland. They were to be careful not to make divisions, not to baptize, nor administer the Lord's Supper.[5]

The difficulties in the way of comprehending within the National Church men such as these, and societies formed upon such principles, ought not to have been insurmountable. Yet it must be allowed that in practice the difficulties would in no case have been found trivial. As with Zinzendorf and his united brethren, so with Wesley and his co-workers and disciples. Their aims were exalted, their labours noble, the results which they achieved were immense. But intermingled with it all there was so much weakness and credulity, so much weight given to the

[1] Dorner's *History of Protestant Theology*, ii. 204–6. Rose's *Protestantism in Germany*, 46–9. A. S. Farrer's *History of Religious Thought*, note 17, p. 600. M. J. Matter's *Histoire de Christianisme*, 4, 346.

[2] Matter's *Histoire de Christianisme*, 4, 368.

[3] T. Rowan's *Life and Letters of Schleiermacher*, i. 30.

[4] 'Remarks on the Defence to Aspasio,' &c., 1766,—*Works*, 10, 351.

[5] Idem.

workings of a heated and over-wrought imagination, so many openings to a blind fanaticism, such morbid extravagances, so much from which sober reason and cultivated intellect shrank with instinctive repulsion, that even an exaggerated distrust of the good effected was natural and pardonable. Wesley's mind, though not by any means of the highest order of capacity, was refined, well trained, and practical; Whitefield was gifted with extraordinary powers of stirring the emotions by his fervid eloquence. But they often worked with very rude instruments; and defects, which were prominent enough even in the leaders, were sometimes in the followers magnified into glaring faults. Wesley himself was a true preacher of righteousness, and had the utmost horror of all Antinomianism, all teaching that insisted slightly on moral duties, or which disparaged any outward means of grace. But there was a section of the Methodists, especially in the earlier years of the movement, who seemed much disposed to raise the cry so well known among some of the fanatics of the Commonwealth of 'No works, no law, no Commandments.' There were many more who, in direct opposition to Wesley's sounder judgment, but not uncountenanced by what he said or wrote in his more excited moments, trusted in impressions, impulse, and feelings as principal guides of conduct. Wesley himself was never wont to speak of the Church of England or of its clergy in violent or abusive terms.[1] Whitefield, however, and, still more so, many of the lesser preachers, not unfrequently indulged in an undiscriminating bitterness of invective which could not fail to alienate Churchmen, and to place the utmost obstacles in the way of united action. Seward was a special offender in this respect. How was it possible for them to hold out a right hand of fellowship to one who would say, for example, that 'the scarlet whore of Babylon is not more corrupt either in principle or practice than the Church of England;'[2] and that Archbishop Tillotson, of whom, though they might differ from him, they were all justly proud, was 'a traitor who had sold his Lord for a better price than Judas had done.'[3] Such language inevitably widened the ever-increasing gap. It might have been provoked, although not justified, by tirades no less furious and unreasoning on the part of some of the assailants of the Methodist cause. In any case, it could not fail to estrange many who might otherwise have gladly taken a friendly interest in the movement; it could not fail to dull their perception of its merits and of its spiritual exploits, and to incline them to point out with

[1] Wesley's 'Answer to Lavington,'—*Works*, vol. ix. 3.

[2] Seward's 'Journal,' 45, quoted by Lavington. *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compared*, 11.

[3] Seward's 'Journal,' 62. Lavington, *Id.*

the quick discernment of hostile critics the evident blots and errors which frequently defaced it.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, when projects of Church Comprehension had come to an end, a great deal of angry controversy in Parliament, in Convocation, and throughout the country at large was excited by the practice of occasional conformity. Never was a question more debased by considerations with which it ought not to have had anything to do. In itself it seemed a very simple one. The failure of the schemes for Comprehension had left in the ranks of Nonconformity a great number of moderate Dissenters—Presbyterians and others—who were separated from the Low Churchmen of the day by an exceedingly narrow interval. Many of them were thoroughly well affected to the National Church, and were only restrained by a few scruples from being regular members of it. But since the barrier remained—a slight one, perhaps, but one which they felt they could not pass—might they not at all events render a partial allegiance to the national worship, by occasional attendance at its services, and by communicating with it now and then? The question, especially under the circumstances of the time, was none the less important for its simplicity. Unhappily, it was one which could not be answered on its merits. The operation of the Test Act interfered—a statute framed for the defence of the civil and ecclesiastical constitution of the country, but which long survived to be a stain and disgrace to it. A measure so miserably false in principle as to render civil and military qualifications dependent upon a sacramental test must in any case be worse than indefensible. As all feel now, and as many felt even then, to make

> The symbols of atoning grace
> An office key, a pick-lock to a place,

must remain

> A blot that will be still a blot, in spite
> Of all that grave apologists may write;
> And though a bishop toil to cleanse the stain,
> He wipes and scours the silver cup in vain.

This Act, thus originated, which lingered in the Statute Book till the reign of George IV., which even thoroughly religious men could be so blinded by their prejudices as to defend, and which even such friends of toleration as Lord Mansfield could declare to be a 'bulwark of the Constitution,'[1] put occasional conformity into a very different position from that which it would naturally take. Henceforth no Dissenter could communi-

[1] Seward's *Anecdotes*, vol. ii. (ed. 1798), 437.

cate in the parish churches of his country without incurring some risk of an imputation which is especially revolting to all feelings alike of honour and religion. He might have it cast in his teeth that he was either committing or countenancing the sacrilegious hypocrisy, the base and shuffling trick, of communicating only to qualify for office.

It is needless here to enter into the details of the excited and discreditable agitation by which the custom of occasional conformity was at length, for a time, defeated. The contest may be said to have begun in 1697, when Sir Humphrey Edwin, upon his election as Lord Mayor, after duly receiving the Sacrament according to the use of the Church of England, proceeded in state to the Congregational Chapel at Pinner's Hall.[1] Exactly the same thing recurred in 1701, in the case of Sir T. Abney.[2] The practice thus publicly illustrated was passionately opposed both by strict Dissenters and by strict Churchmen. De Foe, as a representative of the former, inveighed against it with great bitterness, as perfectly scandalous, and altogether unjustifiable.[3] The High Church party, on their side, reprobated it with no less severity. A bill to prevent the practice was at once prepared. In spite of the strength of the Tory and High Church reaction, the Whig party in the House of Lords, vigorously supported by the Liberal Bishops, just succeeded in throwing it out. A conference was held between the two houses, 'the most crowded that ever had been known—so much weight was laid on this matter on both sides,'[4] with a similar result. The Commons made other endeavours to carry the Act in a modified form, and with milder penalties; a somewhat unscrupulous minority made an attempt to tack it to a money bill, and so effect their purpose by a manœuvre. The Sacheverell episode fanned the strange excitement that prevailed. A large body of the country gentry and country clergy imagined that the destinies of the Church hung in the balance. The populace caught the infection, without any clear understanding what they were clamouring for. The Court, until it began to be alarmed, used all its influence in support of the proposed bill. Everywhere, but especially in coffee-houses and taverns,[5] a loud cry was raised against the Whigs, and most of all against the Whig Bishops, for their steady opposition to it. At last, when all chance of carrying the measure seemed to be lost, it was suddenly made law through what appears to have

[1] Calamy's *Life and Times*, i. 404. Perry's *History of the Church of England*, 3, 145.

[2] Calamy, i. 465. Skeats' *History of the Free Churches*, 187.

[3] Calamy, i. 465.

[4] Burnet's *History of his Own Times*, 721.

[5] Hoadly, 'Letter to a Clergyman,' &c.—*Works*, i. 19.

been a most discreditable compromise between a section of the Whigs and the Earl of Nottingham. Great was the dismay of some, great the triumph of others. It was 'a disgraceful bargain,' said Calamy.[1] To many, Nottingham was eminently a 'patriot and a lover of the Church.'[2] Addison makes Sir Roger 'launch out into the praise of the late Act of Parliament for securing the Church of England. He told me with great satisfaction, that he believed it already began to take effect, for that a rigid Dissenter, who chanced to dine at his house on Christmas-day, had been observed to eat very plentifully of his plum-porridge.'[3] The Act which received the worthy knight's characteristic panegyric was repealed seven years afterwards.

Nothing could well be more alien—it may be rather said, more repugnant—to the general tenor of present thought and feeling than this controversy of a past generation. Its importance, as a question of the day, mainly hinged upon the Test Act; and there is no fear of history so repeating itself as to witness ever again the operation of a law consigned, however tardily, to such well-merited opprobrium. Unquestionably, when Dissenters received the Sacrament in the parish churches, the motive was in most cases a secular one. 'It is manifest,' says Hoadly, 'that there is hardly any occasional communicant who ever comes near the Church but precisely at that time when the whole parish knows he must come to qualify himself for some office.'[4] This was a great scandal to religion; but it was one the guilt of which, in many, if not in most cases, entirely devolved upon the authors and promoters of the test. As the writer just quoted has elsewhere remarked, a man might with perfect integrity do for the sake of an office what he had always held to be lawful, and what some men whom he much respected considered to be even a duty. It was a very scandalous thing for a person who lived in constant neglect of his religious duties to come merely to qualify. But plainly this was a sin which a Conformist was quite as likely to commit as a Nonconformist.[5]

The imposition of a test on all accounts so ill-advised and odious in principle was the more unfortunate, because, apart from it, occasional conformity, though it would never have attracted any considerable attention, might have been really important in its consequences. Considered in itself, without any reference to external and artificial motives, it had begun to take a strong hold upon the minds of many of the most exemplary and eminent Nonconformists. When the projects of comprehen-

[1] Calamy, ii. 243. [2] *Guardian*, No. 41. [3] *Spectator*, No. 269.
[4] Hoadly, 'Reasonableness of Conformity.'—*Works*, i. 284.
[5] 'Letter to a Clergyman,' &c.—*Works*, i. 30.

sion failed, on which the moderates in Church and Dissent had set their heart, the Presbyterian leaders, and some of the Congregationalists, turned their thoughts to occasional conformity as to a kind of substitute for that closer union with the National Church which they had reluctantly given up. It was 'a healing custom,' as Baxter had once called it. There were many quiet, religious people, members of Nonconformist bodies, who, as an expression of charity and Christian fellowship, and because they did not like to feel themselves entirely severed from the unity of the National Church, made a point of sometimes receiving the Communion from their parish clergyman, and who 'utterly disliked the design of the Conformity Bill, that it put a brand upon those who least interest themselves in our unhappy disputes.'[1] This was particularly the custom with many of the Presbyterian clergy, headed by Calamy, and, before him, by three men of the highest distinction for their piety, learning, and social influence, of whose services the National Church had been unhappily deprived by the ejection of 1662—Baxter, Bates, and Howe. Some distinguished Churchmen entirely agreed with this. 'I think,' said Archbishop Tenison, 'the practice of occasional Conformity, as used by the Dissenters, is so far from deserving the title of a vile hypocrisy, that it is the duty of all moderate Dissenters, upon their own principles, to do it.'[2] However wrong they might be in their separation, he thought that everything that tended to promote unity ought to be not discountenanced, but encouraged. And Burnet, among others, argued in the same spirit, that just as it had commonly been considered right to communicate with the Protestant churches abroad, as he himself had been accustomed to do in Geneva and Holland, so the Dissenters here were wholly right in communicating with the National Church, even though they wrongly considered it less perfect than their own.[3] He has elsewhere remarked upon the unseemly inconsistency of Prince George of Denmark, who voted in the House of Lords against occasional Conformity, but was himself in every sense of the word an occasional Conformist, keeping up a Lutheran service, but sometimes receiving the Sacrament according to the English rites.[4]

There were of course many men of extreme views on either side to whom, if there had been no such thing as a Test Act, the practice of occasional conformity was a sign of laxity, wholly to be condemned. It was indifference, they said, lukewarmness, neutrality; it was involving the orthodox in the guilt of heresy;

[1] Matthew Henry, in Thoresby's *Correspondence*, i. 438.
[2] Speech in the House of Lords, 1704.
[3] Burnet's *Life and Times*, 741.
[4] Ibid. 721.

it was a self-proclaimed confession of the sin of needless schism. Sacheverell, in his famous sermon, raved against it as an admission of a Trojan horse, big with arms and ruin, into the holy city. It was the persistent effort of false brethren to carry the conventicle into the Church,[1] or the Church into the conventicle. 'What could not be gained by comprehension and toleration must be brought about by moderation and occasional conformity; that is, what they could not do by open violence, they will not fail by secret treachery to accomplish.'[2] Much in the same way, there were Dissenters who would as soon hear the mass as the Liturgy, who would as willingly bow themselves in the house of Rimmon as conform for an hour to the usages of the English Church; and who, 'if you ask them their exceptions at the Book, thank God they never looked at it.'[3] By a decree of the Baptist conference in 1689,[4] repeated in 1742,[5] persons who on any pretext received the Sacrament in a parish church were to be at once excommunicated.

But, had it not been for the provisions of the Test Act, extreme views on the subject would have received little attention, and the counsels of men like Baxter, Bates, and Calamy would have gained a far deeper, if not a wider, hold on the minds of all moderate Nonconformists. The practice in question did, in fact, point towards a comprehension of which the Liberal Churchmen of the time had as yet no idea, but one which might have been based on far sounder principles than any of the schemes which had hitherto been conceived. Under kindlier auspices it might have matured into a system of auxiliary societies affiliated into the National Church, through which persons, who approved in a general way of the doctrine and order of the Prayer Book and Articles, but to whom a different form of worship was more edifying or attractive, might be retained by a looser tie within the established communion. A comprehension of this kind suggests difficulties, but certainly they are not insurmountable. It is the only apparent mode by which High Anglicans, and those who would otherwise be Dissenters, can work together harmoniously, but without suggestion of compromise, as brother Churchmen. And in a great Church there should be abundant room for societies thus incorporated into it, and functions for them to fulfil, not

[1] At this date, as White Kennet's biographer remarks, 'the name of Presbyterian was liberally bestowed on one of the archbishops, on several of the most exemplary bishops, as well as on great numbers among the inferior clergy.'—*Life of Kennet*, 102.

[2] *Sermon before the Lord Mayor*, &c. November 5, 1709.

[3] *The Church of England free from the Imputation of Popery*, 1683.

[4] Skeats' *History of the Free Churches*, 160. [5] Id. 346.

less important than those which they have accomplished at the heavy cost of so much disunion, bitterness, and waste of power. If, at the opening of the eighteenth century, the test had been abolished, and occasional conformity, as practised by such men as Baxter and Bates, instead of being opposed, had been cordially welcomed, and its principles developed, the English Church might have turned to a noble purpose the popularity it enjoyed.

A chapter dealing in any way with Latitudinarianism in the last century would be incomplete if some mention were not made of discussions which, without reference to the removal of Nonconformist scruples, related nevertheless to the general question of the revision of Church formularies. Even if the Liturgy had been far less perfect than it is, and if abuses in the English Church and causes for complaint had been far more flagrant than they were, there would have been little inclination, under the rule of Walpole and his successors, to meddle with prescribed customs. Waterland, in one of his treatises against Clarke, compared perpetual reforming to living on physic. The comparison is apt. But it was rather the fault of his age to trust overmuch to the healing power of nature, and not to apply medicine even where it was really needed. There was very little ecclesiastical legislation in the eighteenth century, except such as was directed at first to the imposition, and afterwards to the tardy removal or abatement, of disabilities upon Roman Catholics and Dissenters. Statesmen dreaded nothing much more than 'a Church clamour.'[1] Their dread was in a great measure justified by the passions which had been excited in the times of the Sacheverell and Church in Danger cries, and by the unreasoning intolerance which broke furiously out afresh when the Bill for naturalising Jews was brought forward in 1753, and when relief to Roman Catholics was proposed in 1778. At the end of the century the panic excited by the French Revolution was an effectual bar against anything that partook in any degree of the nature of innovation. Throughout the whole of the period very little was done, except in improvement of the marriage laws, even to check practices which brought scandal upon the Church or did it evident injury; next to nothing was done with a serious and anxious purpose of promoting its efficiency and extending its popularity. The best considered plans of revision and reform would have found but small favour. It was not without much regret that the Low or Latitudinarian party gave up all hope of procuring any of those alterations in the Prayer Book for which they had laboured so earnestly in the reign of William III. Or rather,

[1] Horace Walpole's *Memoirs*, &c. 366.

they did not entirely give up the hope, but gradually ceased to consider the subject as any longer a practical one. After them the advocacy of such schemes was chiefly left to men who suffered more or less under the imputation of heterodoxy. This, of course, still further discredited the idea of revision, and gave a strong handle to those who were opposed to it. It became easy to set down as Deists or Arians all who suggested alterations in the established order. The 'Free and Candid Disquisitions,'[1] published in 1749 by John Jones, Vicar of Alconbury, did something towards reviving interest in the question. It was mainly a compilation of opinions advanced by eminent divines, past and living, in favour of revising the Liturgy, and making certain omissions and emendations in it. Introductory essays were prefixed. The book was addressed to 'the Governing Bodies of Church and State,' more immediately to the two Houses of Convocation, and commended itself by the modest and generally judicious spirit in which it was written. Warburton wrote to Doddridge that he thought the 'Disquisitions' very edifying and exemplary. 'I wish,' he added, 'success to them as much as you can do.'[2] Some of the bishops would gladly have taken up some such design, and have done their best to further its success. But there was no prospect whatever of anything being done. It was evident that the prevailing disposition was to allow that there were improvements which might and ought to be made, but that all attempts to carry them out should be deferred to some more opportune season, when minds were more tranquil and the Church more united. The effect of the 'Disquisitions' was also seriously injured by the warm advocacy they received from Blackburne and others, who were anxious for far greater changes than any which were then proposed. Blackburne, in the violence of his Protestantism, insisted that in the Reformed Church of England there ought not to be 'one circumstance in her constitution borrowed from the Creeds, Ritual, and Ordinaries of the Popish system.'[3] A little of the same tendency may be discovered in the proposals put forward in the Disquisitions. In truth, in the eighteenth, as in the seventeenth century, there was always some just cause for fear that a work of revision, however desirable in itself, might be marred by some unworthy concessions to a timid and ignorant Protestantism.

[1] They are carefully summarised in a series of papers in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1750, vols. xix and xx. It is clear from the correspondence on the subject how much interest they aroused.—See also Nichols' *Lit. An.*, vol. 3.

[2] Hunt's *Religious Thought in England*, iii. 300.

[3] Blackburne's *Historical View*, &c., Introduction, xx.

Revision of the Liturgy, although occasionally discussed, cannot be said to have been an eighteenth-century question. Subscription, on the other hand, as required by law to the Thirty-nine Articles, received a great deal of anxious attention. This was quite inevitable. Much had been said and written on the subject in the two previous centuries; but until law, or usage so well established and so well understood as to take the place of law, had interpreted with sufficient plainness the force and meaning of subscription, the subject was necessarily encompassed with much uneasiness and perplexity. Through a material alteration in the law of the English Church, the consciences of the clergy have at last been relieved of what could scarcely fail to be a stumbling-block. By an Act passed by Parliament in 1865, and confirmed by both Houses of Convocation, an important change was made in the wording of the declaration required. Before that time the subscriber had to 'acknowledge all and every the Articles. . . . . to be agreeable to the word of God.'[1] He now has to assent to the Articles, the Book of Common Prayer, and of the ordering of priests and deacons, and to believe the doctrine therein set forth to be agreeable to the Word of God. The omission of the 'all and every,' and the insertion of the word 'doctrine' in the singular, constituted a substantial improvement, as distinctly recognising that general adhesion and that liberty of criticism, which had long been practically admitted, and in fact authorised, by competent legal decisions, but which scarcely seemed warranted by the wording of the subscription.

Dr. Jortin, in a treatise which he published about the middle of the last century, summed up under four heads the different opinions which, in his time, were entertained upon the subject. 'Subscription,' he said, 'to the Articles, Liturgy, &c., in a rigid sense, is a consent to them all in general, and to every proposition contained in them; according to the intention of the compiler, when that can be known, and according to the obvious usual signification of the words. Subscription, in a second sense, is a consent to them in a meaning which is not always consistent with the intention of the compiler, nor with the more usual signification of the words; but is consistent with those passages of Scripture which the compiler had in view. Subscription, in a third sense, is an assent to them as to articles of peace and conformity, by which we so far submit to them as not to raise disturbances about them and set the people against them. Subscription, in a fourth sense, is an assent to them as far as they

[1] Canon 36, § 3.

are consistent with the Scriptures and themselves, but no further.'[1] Jortin's classification might perhaps be improved and simplified; but it serves to indicate in how lax a sense subscription was accepted by some—the more so, as it was sometimes, in the case, for instance, of younger undergraduates, evidently intended for a mere declaration of churchmanship—and how oppressive it must have been to the minds and consciences of others. From the very first this ambiguity had existed. There can, indeed, be no doubt that the original composers of the Articles cherished the vain hope of 'avoiding of diversities of opinion,' and intended them all to be understood in one plain literal sense. Yet, in the prefatory declaration, His Majesty 'takes comfort that even in those curious points in which the present differences lie, men of all sorts take the Articles of the Church of England to be for them,' even while he adds the strangely illogical inference that 'therefore' no man is to put his own sense or meaning upon any of them.

Those who insisted upon a stringent and literal interpretation of the Articles were able to use language which, whatever might be the error involved in it, could not fail to impress a grave sense of responsibility upon every truthful and honourable man who might be called upon to give his assent to them. 'The prevarication,' said Waterland, 'of subscribing to forms which men believe not according to the true and proper sense of words, and the known intent of imposers and compilers, and the subtleties invented to defend or palliate such gross insincerity, will be little else than disguised atheism.'[2] Whiston,[3] and other writers, such as Dr. Conybeare,[4] Dean Tucker,[5] and others, spoke scarcely less strongly. It is evident, too, that where subscription was necessary for admission to temporal endowments and Church preferment, the candidate was more than ever bound to examine closely into the sincerity of his act.

But the answer of those who claimed a greater latitude of interpretation was obvious. 'They,' said Paley, 'who contend that nothing less can justify subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles than the actual belief of each and every separate proposition contained in them must suppose the Legislature expected the consent of ten thousand men, and that in perpetual succession, not to one controverted position, but to many hundreds. It is difficult to conceive how this could be expected by any who observed the incurable diversity of human opinions upon all subjects short of

[1] 'Strictures on the Articles, Subscriptions, &c.,' Jortin's *Tracts*, ii. 417.
[2] Quoted in *The Church of England Vindicated*, &c., 1801, p. 2.
[3] Whiston's *Life of Clarke*, &c., 11, 40; *Memoirs*, 157, &c.
[4] Hunt's *Religious Thought in England*, 3, 305. [5] Id. 312.

demonstration.'[1] Subscription on such terms would not only produce total extinction of anything like independent thought,[2] it would become difficult to understand how any rational being could subscribe at all. Practically, those who took the more stringent view acted for the most part on much the same principles as those whom they accused of laxity. They each interpreted the Articles according to their own construction of them. Only the one insisted that the compilers of them were of their mind; the others simply argued that theirs was a lawful and allowable interpretation. Bishop Tomline expressed himself in much the same terms as Waterland had done; but was indignantly asked how, in his well-known treatise, he could possibly impose an altogether anti-Calvinistic sense upon the Articles without violation of their grammatical meaning, and without encouraging what the Calvinists of the day called 'the general present prevarication.'[3] A moderate Latitudinarianism in regard of subscription was after all more candid, as it certainly was more rational. Nor was there any lack of distinguished authority to support it. 'For the Church of England,' said Chillingworth, 'I am persuaded that the constant doctrine of it is so pure and orthodox, that whosoever believes it, and lives according to it, undoubtedly he shall be saved, and that there is no error in it which may necessitate or warrant any man to disturb the peace or renounce the communion of it. This, in my opinion, is all intended by subscription.'[4] Bramhall,[5] Stillingfleet, Sanderson,[6] Patrick,[7] Fowler, Laud,[8] Tillotson, Chief Justice King, Baxter, and other eminent men of different schools of thought, were on this point more or less agreed with Chillingworth. Moreover, the very freedom of criticism which such great divines as Jeremy Taylor had exercised without thought of censure, and the earnest vindication, frequent among all Protestants, of the rights of the individual judgment, were standing proofs that subscription had not been generally considered the oppressive bondage which some were fain to make it.

Nevertheless, the position maintained by Waterland, by Whiston, by Blackburne, and by some of the more ardent Calvinists, was strong, and felt to be so. In appearance, if not in

[1] Paley's *Moral and Political Philosophy*, chap. xxii.

[2] Mr. Buxton, Parl. Speech, June 21, 1865.

[3] *Church of England Vindicated*, &c., 52, 161. [4] *Works*, vol. i. 35.

[5] Quoted in Jortin's *Tracts*, ii. 423, and Hunt's *Religious Thought in England*, ii. 25. [6] Quoted in Malone's note to Boswell's *Johnson*, ii. 104.

[7] Review of Maizeaux' 'Life of Chillingworth,' *Guardian*, November 30, 1864.

[8] 'Sense of the Articles,' &c. *Works*, vol. xv., 528–33. 'Moral Prognostication,' &c. id. xv., 440.

reality, there was clearly something equivocal, some appearance of casuistry and reserve, if not of insincerity, in subscribing to formularies, part of which were no longer accepted in the spirit in which they had been drawn up, and with the meaning they had been originally intended to bear. The Deistical and Arian controversies of the eighteenth century threw these considerations into more than usual prominence. Since the time of Laud, Arminian had been so generally substituted for Calvinistical tenets in the Church of England, that few persons would have challenged the right of subscribing the Articles with a very different construction from that which they wore when the influence of Bucer and Peter Martyr was predominant, or even when Hales and Ward, and their fellow Calvinists, attended in behalf of England at the Synod of Dort. On this point, at all events, it was quite unmistakable that the Articles (as Hoadly said) [1] were by public authority allowed a latitude of interpretation. But it was not quite easy to see where the bounds of this latitude were to be drawn, unless they were to be left to the individual conscience. And it was a latitude which had become open to abuse in a new and formidable way. Open or suspected Deists and Arians were known to have signed the Articles on the ground of general conformity to the English Church. No one knew how far revealed religion might be undermined, or attacked under a masked battery, by concealed and unsuspected enemies. The danger that Deists, in any proper sense of the word, might take English orders appears to have been quite overrated. No disbeliever in Revelation, unless guilty of an insincerity which precautions were powerless to guard against, could give his allegiance to the English liturgy. But Arian subscription had become a familiar name ; and a strong feeling arose that a clearer understanding should be come to as to what acceptance of Church formularies implied. In another chapter of this work the subject has come under notice in its relation to those who held, or were supposed to hold, heretical opinions upon the doctrine of the Trinity. The remarks, therefore, here made need only be concerned with the uneasiness that was awakened in reference to subscription generally. The society which was instituted at the Feathers Tavern, to agitate for the abolition of subscription, in favour of a simple acknowledgment of belief in Scripture, and which petitioned Parliament to this effect in 1772, was a very mixed company. Undoubtedly there were many Deists, Socinians, and Arians in it. But it also numbered in its list many thoroughly orthodox clergymen, and would have numbered many

[1] Answer to Rep. of Con. chap. i. § 20.—*Works*, ii. 534.

more, had it not been for the natural objection which they felt at being associated, in such a connection, with men whose views they greatly disapproved of. Archdeacon Blackburne himself, the great promoter of it, held no heretical opinions on the subject of the Trinity. There was a great deal in the doctrine, discipline, and ritual of the Church of England which he thought exceptionable, but his objections seem to have been entirely those which were commonly brought forward by ultra-Protestants. His vehement opposition to subscription rested on wholly general grounds. He could not, he said, accept the view that the Articles could be signed with a latitude of interpretation or as articles of peace. They were evidently meant to be received in one strictly literal sense. This, no Church had a right to impose upon any of its members ; it was wholly wrong to attempt to settle religion once for all in an uncontrollable form.[1] The petition, however, had not the smallest chance of success. The Evangelicals—a body fast rising in numbers and activity—and the Methodists[2] were strongly opposed. So were all the High Churchmen ; so also were a great number of the Latitudinarians. Dr. Balguy, for instance, after the example of Hoadly, while he strongly insisted that the laws of the Church and realm most fully warranted a broad construction of the meaning of the Articles, was entirely opposed to the abolition of subscription. It would, he feared, seriously affect the constitution of the National Church. The Bill was thrown out in three successive years by immense majorities. After the third defeat Dr. Jebb, Theophilus Lindsey, and some other clergymen seceded to the Unitarians. The language of the earlier Articles admits of no interpretation by which Unitarians, in any proper sense of the word, could with any honesty hold their place in the English Communion.

Thus the attempt to abolish subscription failed, and under circumstances which showed that the Church had escaped a serious danger. But the difficulty which had led many orthodox clergymen to join, not without risk of obloquy, in the petition remained untouched. It was, in fact, aggravated rather than not ; for 'Arian subscription' had naturally induced a disposition, strongly expressed in some Parliamentary speeches, to reflect injuriously upon that reasonable and allowed latitude of construction without which the Reformed Church of England would in every generation have lost some of its best and ablest men. Some, therefore, were anxious that the articles and Liturgy should be revised ; and a petition to this effect was presented in 1772 to the

[1] Blackburne's *Historical View*, Introd. xxxix.
[2] H. Walpole, *Memoirs of the Reign of George III.* (Doran), i. 7, 8.

Archbishop of Canterbury. Among the other names attached to it appears that of Beilby Porteus, afterwards Bishop of London and a principal supporter of the Evangelical party. Some proposed that the 'orthodox Articles' only—by which they meant those that relate to the primary doctrines of the Christian creed—should be subscribed to;[1] some thought that it would be sufficient to require of the clergy only an unequivocal assent to the Book of Common Prayer. It seems strange that while abolition of subscription was proposed by some, revision of the Articles by others, no one, so far as it appears, proposed the more obvious alternative of modifying the wording of the terms in which subscription was made. But nothing of any kind was done. The bishops, upon consultation, thought it advisable to leave matters alone. They may have been right. But, throughout the greater part of the century, leaving alone was too much the wisdom of the leaders and rulers of the English Church.

In all the course of its long history, before and after the Reformation, the National Church of England has never, perhaps, occupied so peculiarly isolated a place in Christendom as at the extreme end of the last century and through the earlier years of the present one. At one or another period it may have been more jealous of foreign influence, more violently antagonistic to Roman Catholics, more intolerant of Dissent, more wedded to uniformity in doctrine and discipline. But at no one time had it stood, as a Church, so distinctly apart from all other Communions. If the events of the French Revolution had slightly mitigated the antipathy to Roman Catholicism, there was still not the very slightest approximation to it on the part of the highest Anglicans, if any such continued to exist. The Eastern Church, after attracting a faint curiosity through the overtures of the later Nonjurors, was as wholly unknown and unthought of as though it had been an insignificant sect in the furthest wilds of Muscovy. All communications with the foreign Protestant Churches had ceased. It had beheld, after the death of Wesley, almost the last links severed between itself and Methodism. It had become separated from Dissenters generally by a wider interval. Its attitude towards them was becoming less intolerant, but more chilled and exclusive. The Evangelicals combined to some extent with Nonconformists, and often met on the same platforms. But there was no longer anything like the friendly intercourse which had existed in the beginning and in the middle of last century between the bishops and clergy of the 'moderate' party in the Church on the one hand, and the principal Nonconformist ministers on the other.

[1] *Consideration of the Present State of Religion*, &c. 1801, 11.

Comprehension—until the time of Dr. Arnold—was no longer discussed. Occasional conformity had in long past time received the blow which deprived it of importance. Again, the Church of England was still almost confined, except by its missions, within the limits of the four seas. Pananglicanism was a term yet to be invented. The Colonial empire was still in its infancy, and its Church in tutelage. There was a sister Church in the United States. But the wounds inflicted in the late war were scarcely staunched ; and the time had not arrived to speak of cordiality, or of community of Church interests. It was from Scottish, not from English hands, that America received her first bishop.

Perhaps, in the order of that far-reaching Providence which is traced in the history of Churches as of States, it may, after all, have been well that, in the century under our review, the somewhat sluggish stream of life which circulated in the English Church had not sought out for itself any new channels. A more diffusive activity might be reserved to it for better times. In the eighteenth century there would always have been cause for fear that, in seeking to embrace more, it might lose some valuable part of what it already had, and which, once lost, it might not be easy to recover. There were many to whom 'moderation' would have been another word for compromise ; and who, not so much in the interests of true unity as for the sake of tranquil days, would have made concessions which a later age would regret in vain. Moreover, the Churchmen of that period had a great work before them of consolidation, and of examination of fundamental principles. They did not do that part of their work amiss. Possibly they might have done it not so well, had their energies been less concentrated on the special task which employed their intellects—if they had been called upon to turn their attention to important changes in the ecclesiastical polity, or to new schemes of Church extension. Faults, blunders, shortcomings, are not to be excused by unforeseen good ultimately involved in them ; yet it is, at all events, an allowable and pleasant thing to consider whether good may not have resulted in the end. Throughout the eighteenth century the principles of the Church of England were retained, if sometimes inactive, yet at least intact, ready for development and expansion, if ever the time should come. Already, at the end of the century, our National Church was teeming with the promise of a new or reinvigorated life. The time for greater union, in which this Church may have a great part to do, and for increased comprehensiveness, may, in our day, be ripening towards maturity. Even now there is little fear that in any changes and improvements which might be made, the English Church would relax its hold either on primitive and

Catholic uses, or on that precious inheritance of liberty which was secured at the Reformation. There may be difficulties, too great to be overcome, in the way either of Church revision or Church comprehension ; but if they should be achieved, their true principles would be better understood than ever they were in the days of Tillotson and Calamy, or of Secker and Doddridge.

C. J. A.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TRINITARIAN CONTROVERSY.

In an age which above all things prided itself upon its reasonableness, it would have been strange indeed if that doctrine of Christianity which is objected to by unbelievers as most repugnant to reason, had not taken a prominent place among the controversies which then abounded in every sphere of theological thought. To the thoughtful Christian, the question of questions must ever be that which forms the subject of this chapter. It is, if possible, even a more vital question than that which was involved in the Deistical controversy. The very name 'Christian' implies as much. A Christian is a follower of Christ. Who, then, is this Christ? What relation does He bear to the Great Being whom Christians, Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics alike adore? What do we mean when we say that He is the Son of God Incarnate? That He is still present with his Church through his Holy Spirit? These are only other forms of putting the question, What is the Trinity? The various answers given to this question in the eighteenth century form an important part of the ecclesiastical history of the period.

The subject carries us back in thought to the earliest days of Christianity. During the first four centuries, the nature of the Godhead, and the relation of the Three Persons of the Trinity to each other, were directly or indirectly the causes of almost all the divisions which rent the Church. They had been matters of discussion before the death of the last surviving Apostle, and the three centuries which followed his decease were fruitful in theories upon the subject. These theories reappear with but little alteration in the period which comes more immediately under our present consideration. If history ever repeats itself, it might be expected to do so on the revival of this discussion after an abeyance of many centuries. For it is one of those questions on which modern research can throw but little light. The same materials

which enabled the inquirer of the eighteenth century to form his conclusion, existed in the fourth century. Moreover, there was a tendency in the discussions of the later period to run in an historical direction ; in treating of them, therefore, our attention will constantly be drawn to the views of the earlier thinkers. With regard to these, it will be sufficient to say that their speculations on the mysterious subject of the Trinity group themselves under one or other of these four heads.

1. The view of those who contend for the mere humanity of Christ—a view which, as will be seen presently, is often claimed by Unitarians as the earliest belief of Christendom.

2. The view of those who deny the distinct personality of the Second and Third Persons of the Blessed Trinity. This was held with various modifications by a great variety of thinkers, but it passes under the general name of *Sabellianism*.

3. The view of those who hold that Christ was something more than man, but less than God ; less than God, that is, in the highest, and indeed the only proper, sense of the word God. This, like the preceding view, was held by a great variety of thinkers, and with great divergences, but it passes under the general name of *Arianism*.

4. The view of those who hold that 'there is but one living and true God,' but that 'in the Unity of this Godhead there are three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.' This view is called by its advocates *Catholicism*, for they hold that it is, and ever has been, the doctrine of the Universal Church of Christ ; but, inasmuch as the admission of such a name would be tantamount to giving up the whole point in question, it is refused by its opponents, who give it the name of *Athanasianism*.

In England, the Trinitarian question began to be agitated in the later half of the seventeenth century. Possibly the interest in the subject may have been stimulated by the migration into England of many anti-Trinitarians from Poland, who had been banished from the country by an Order of Council in 1660. At any rate, the date synchronises with the re-opening of the question in this country. It is probable, however, that under any circumstances the discussion would have arisen.

Before the publication of Bishop Bull's first great work in 1685, no controversial treatise on either side of the question—none, at least, of any importance—was published in this country, though there had of course been individual anti-Trinitarians in England long before that time.

A few words on the 'Defensio Fidei Nicænæ' will be a fitting introduction to the account of the controversy which belongs

properly to the eighteenth century. Bishop Bull's defence was written in Latin, and was therefore not intended for the unlearned. It was exclusively confined to this one question: What were the views of the ante-Nicene Fathers on the subject of the Trinity, and especially on the relation of the Second to the First Person? But though the work was addressed only to a very limited number of readers, and dealt only with one, and that a very limited, view of the question, the importance of thoroughly discussing this particular view can scarcely be exaggerated for the following reason. When the attention of any one familiar with the precise definitions of the Catholic Church which were necessitated by the speculations of Arians and other heretics is called for the first time to the writings of the ante-Nicene Fathers, he may be staggered by the absence of equal definiteness and precision in them. Bishop Bull boldly met the difficulties which might thus occur. He minutely examined the various expressions which could be wrested into an anti-Trinitarian sense, showing how they were compatible with the Catholic Faith, and citing and dwelling upon other expressions which were totally incompatible with any other belief. He showed that the crucial test of orthodoxy, the one single term at which Arians and semi-Arians scrupled—that is, the Homoousion or Consubstantiality of the Son with the Father—was actually in use before the Nicene Council, and that it was thoroughly in accordance with the teaching of the ante-Nicene Fathers. This is proved, among other ways, by the constant use of a simile which illustrates, as happily as earthly things can illustrate heavenly, the true relation of the Son to the Father. Over and over again this is compared by the early fathers to the ray of light which proceeding from the sun is a part of it, and yet without any division or diminution from it, but actually consubstantial with it. He fully admits that the early fathers acknowledged a certain pre eminence in the First Person, but only such a pre-eminence as the term Father suggests, a pre-eminence implying no inequality of nature, but simply a priority of order, inasmuch as the Father is, as it were, the fountain of the Deity, God in Himself,[1] while the Son is God *of* God, and, to recur to the old simile incorporated in the Nicene Creed, Light *of* Light.[2]

Bishop Bull's two subsequent works on the subject of the Trinity ('Judicium Ecclesiæ Catholicæ' and 'Primitiva et Apostolica Traditio') may be regarded as supplements to the 'Defence.' The object of the 'Judicium' was to show, in opposition to Episcopius, that the Nicene fathers held a belief of Our Lord's true and proper divinity to be an indispensable term of Catholic com-

[1] αὐτόθεος. [2] φῶς ἐκ φωτός.

munion; his latest work was directed against the opinion of Zuicker that Christ's divinity, pre-existence, and incarnation were inventions of early heretics.[1]

It is somewhat remarkable that although in the interval which elapsed between the publication of these and of his first work the Trinitarian controversy in England had been assuming larger proportions and awakening a wider interest, Bull never entered into the arena with his countrymen. But the fact is, his point of view was different from theirs. He confined himself exclusively to the historical aspect of the question, while other defenders of the Trinity were 'induced to overstep the boundaries of Scripture proof and historical testimony, and push their inquiries into the dark recesses of metaphysical speculation.'[2] Chief among these was Dr. W. Sherlock, Dean of St. Paul's, who in 1690 published his 'Vindication of the Trinity,' which he describes as 'a new mode of explaining that great mystery by a hypothesis which gives an easy and intelligible notion of a Trinity in Unity, and removes the charge of contradiction.' In this work Sherlock hazarded assertions which were unquestionably 'new,' but not so unquestionably sound. He affirmed, among other things, that the Persons of the Godhead were distinct in the same way as the persons of Peter, James, and John, or any other men. Such assertions were not unnaturally suspected of verging perilously near upon Tritheism, and his book was publicly censured by the Convocation of the University of Oxford. On the other hand, Dr. Wallis, Professor of Geometry, and the famous Dr. South, published treatises against Dr. Sherlock, which, while avoiding the Scylla of Tritheism, ran dangerously near to the Charybdis of Sabellianism. Like all his writings, South's treatise was racy, but violently abusive, and such irritation and acrimony were engendered, that the Royal authority was at last exercised in restraining each party from introducing novel opinions, and requiring them to adhere to such explications only as had already received the sanction of the Church.

Chillingworth, in his Intellectual System, propounded a theory on the Trinity which savoured of Arianism; Burnet and Tillotson called down the fiercest invectives from that able controversialist Charles Leslie, for 'making the Three Persons of God only three manifestations, or the same Person of God considered under three different qualifications and respects as our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier,' while Burnet argued that the inhabitation of God in Christ made Christ to be God.

Thus at the close of the seventeenth century the subject of

[1] See Van Mildert's *Life of Waterland*, § 3, p. 29. [2] Id.

the Trinity was agitating the minds of some of the chief divines of the age. It must be observed, however, that so far the controversy between theologians of the first rank had been conducted within the limits of the Catholic Faith. They disputed, not about the doctrine of the Trinity itself, but simply about the mode of explaining it.

Still these disputes between English Churchmen strengthened the hands of the anti-Trinitarians. These latter represented the orthodox as divided into Tritheists and Nominalists, and the press teemed with pamphlets setting forth with more or less ability the usual arguments against the Trinity. These were for the most part published anonymously ; for their publication would have brought their writers within the range of the law, the Act of 1689 having expressly excluded those who were unsound on the subject of the Trinity from the tolerated sects. One of the most famous tracts, however, 'The Naked Gospel,' was discovered to have been written by Dr. Bury, Rector of Exeter College, Oxford, and was burnt by order of the Convocation of that University. 'A Historical Vindication of the Naked Gospel,' was also a work of considerable power, and was attributed to the famous Le Clerc. But with these exceptions, the anti-Trinitarians, though they were energetic and prolific in a certain kind of literature, had not yet produced any writer who had succeeded in making his mark permanently upon the age.

Thus the question stood at the commencement of the eighteenth century. In one sense the controversy was at its height ; that is to say, some of the ablest writers in the Church had written or were writing upon the subject ; but the real struggle between the Unitarians (so called) and the Trinitarians had hardly yet begun, for under the latter term almost all the disputants of high mark would fairly have come.

The new century found the pen of that doughty champion of the Faith, Charles Leslie, busy at work on the Socinian controversy. His letters on this subject had been begun some years before this date ; but they were not finally completed until the eighteenth century was some years old. Leslie was ever ready to defend what he held to be the Christian faith against all attacks from whatever quarter they might come. Deists, Jews, Quakers, Romanists, Erastians, and Socinians, all fell under his lash ; his treatise on the last of these, being the first in order of date, and by no means the last in order of merit among the eighteenth-century literature on the subject of the Trinity, now comes under our notice.

Although his dialogue is nominally directed only against the Socinians, it is full of valuable remarks on the anti-Trinitarians

generally; and he brings out some points more clearly and forcibly than subsequent and more voluminous writers on the subject have done. For example, he meets the old objection that the doctrine of the Trinity is incredible as involving a contradiction, by pointing out that it rests upon the fallacy of arguing from a nature which we know to quite a different nature of which we know little or nothing.[1] The objection that the Christian Trinity was borrowed from the Platonists he turns against the objectors by asking, 'What is become of the master argument of the Socinians that the Trinity is contradictory to common sense and reason?—Yet now they would make it the invention of the principal and most celebrated philosophers, men of the most refined reason.'[2]

On the whole this is a very valuable contribution to the apologetic literature on the subject of the Trinity, for though Leslie, like his predecessors, sometimes has recourse to abstruse arguments to explain the 'modes' of the divine presence, yet he is far too acute a controversialist to lay himself open, as Sherlock and South had done, to imputations of heresy on any side; and his general method of treating the question is lucid enough, and full of just such arguments as would be most telling to men of common sense, for whom rather than for profound theologians the treatise was written.

About the same time that this treatise was published, there arose what was intended to be a new sect, or, according to the claims of its founders, the revival of a very old one—a return, in fact, to original Christianity. The founder or reviver of this party was William Whiston, a man of great learning, and of a thoroughly straightforward and candid disposition, but withal so eccentric, that it is difficult sometimes to treat his speculations seriously. His character was a strange compound of credulity and scepticism. He was 'inclined to believe true' the legend of Abgarus' epistle to Christ, and Christ's reply. He published a vindication of the Sibylline oracles 'with the genuine oracles themselves.' He had a strong faith in the physical efficacy of anointing the sick with oil. But his great discovery was the genuineness and inestimable value of the Apostolical Constitutions and Canons. He was 'satisfied that they were of equal value with the four Gospels;' nay, 'that they were the most

[1] 'We cannot charge anything to be a contradiction in one nature because it is so in another, unless we understand both natures. Because a nature we understand not, cannot be explained to us but by allusion to some nature we do understand.'—Leslie's *Theological Works*, vol. ii. p. 402, 'The Socinian Controversy.'

[2] Leslie's *Theological Works*, ii. 405.

sacred of the canonical books of the New Testament ; that polemical controversies would never cease until they were admitted as the standing rule of Christianity.' The learned world generally had pronounced them to be a forgery, but that was easily accounted for. The Constitutions favoured the Eusebian doctrines, and were therefore repudiated of course by those who were interested in maintaining the Athanasian heresy.

Whiston had many missions to fulfil. He had to warn a degenerate age against the wickedness of second marriages ; he had to impress upon professing Christians the duty of trine immersion and of anointing the sick ; he had to prepare them for the Millennium, which, according to his calculations when he wrote his Memoirs, was to take place in twenty years from that time. But his great mission of all was to propagate Eusebianism and to explode the erroneous notions about the Trinity which were then unhappily current in the Church. His favourite theory on this subject may be found in almost all his works ; but he propounded it *in extenso* in a work which he entitled 'Primitive Christianity revived.' Whiston vehemently repudiated the imputation of Arianism. He called himself an Eusebian, 'not,' he is careful to tell us, 'that he approved of all the conduct of Eusebius of Nicomedia, from whom that appellation was derived ; but because that most uncorrupt body of the Christian Church which he so much approved of had this name originally bestowed upon them, and because 'tis a name much more proper to them than Arians.' Whiston formed a sort of society which at first numbered among those who attended its meetings men who afterwards attained to great eminence in the Church ; among others, B. Hoadly, successively Bishop of Bangor, Hereford, Salisbury and Winchester, Rundle, afterwards Bishop of Derry, and then of Gloucester, and Dr. Samuel Clarke. But Whiston was a somewhat inconvenient friend for men who desired to stand well with the powers that be. They all fell off lamentably from the principles of primitive Christianity,— Hoadly sealing his defection by the crowning enormity of marrying a second wife.

Poor Whiston grievously lamented the triumph of interest over truth, which these defections implied. Neither the censures of Convocation nor the falling off of his friends had any power to move *him*. He still continued for some time a member of the Church of England. But his character was far too honest and clear-sighted to enable him to shut his eyes to the fact that the Liturgy of the Church was in many points sadly unsound on the principles of primitive Christianity. To remedy this defect he put forth a Liturgy which he termed 'The Liturgy of the Church of England reduced nearer to the Primitive Standard.' It was

in most respects precisely identical with that in use, only it was purged from all vestiges of the Athanasian heresy. The principal changes were in the Doxology, which was altered into what he declares was its original form, in the prayer of St. Chrysostom, in the first four petitions of the Litany, and one or two others, and in the collect for Trinity Sunday. The Established Church was, however, so blind to the truth that she declined to adopt the proposed alterations, and Whiston was obliged to leave her communion. He found a home, in which, however, he was not altogether comfortable, among the General Baptists.

The real reviver of modern Arianism in England was Whiston's friend, Dr. Samuel Clarke. It has been seen that hitherto all theologians of the highest calibre who had taken part in the Trinitarian controversy would come under the denomination of Trinitarians, if we give that term a fairly wide latitude. In 1712 Dr. Clarke, who had already won a high reputation in the field of theological literature,[1] startled the world by the publication of his 'Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity.' This book was long regarded as a sort of text-book of modern Arianism. The plan of the work was to make an exhaustive collection of all the texts in the New Testament which bear upon the nature of the Godhead—in itself a most useful work, and one which was calculated to supply a distinct want in theology. No less than 1,251 texts, all more or less pertinent to the matter in hand, were collected by this industrious writer, and to many of them were appended explanations and criticisms which bear evident marks of being the product of a scholar and a divine. But the advocates of the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity had no need to go further than the mere headings of the chapters of this famous work to have their suspicions justly awakened respecting its tendency. Chapter i. treated 'of God the Father;' chapter ii. 'of the Son of God;' chapter iii. 'of the Holy Spirit of God.' The natural correlatives to 'God the Father' would be 'God the Son' and 'God the Holy Ghost;' there was something suspicious in the change of these expressions into 'the Son of God' and the Holy Spirit of God.' A closer examination of the work will soon show us that the change was not without its significance. 'The Scripture Doctrine' leads substantially to a very similar conclusion to that at which Whiston had arrived. The Father alone is the one supreme God; the Son is a Divine being as far as divinity is communicable by this supreme God; the Holy Ghost is inferior both to the Father and the Son, not in order only, but in dominion and

[1] By his famous 'à priori' arguments for the Being and Attributes of God, and by his answers to the Deists generally.

authority. Only Dr. Clarke expresses himself more guardedly than his friend. He had already made a great name among theologians, and he had no desire to lose it.

We may take the appearance of Dr. Clarke's book as the commencement of a new era in this controversy, which after this time began to reach its zenith. Various opponents at once arose, attacking various parts of Dr. Clarke's scheme. Dr. Wells complained that he had taken no notice of the Old Testament, that he had failed to show how the true sense of Scripture was to be ascertained, and that he had disparaged creeds, confessions of faith, and the testimony of the fathers; Mr. Nelson complained, not without reason, of his unfair treatment of Bishop Bull; Dr. Gastrell pointed out that there was only one out of Dr. Clarke's fifty-five propositions to which an Arian would refuse to subscribe.[1]

These and others did good service on particular points; but it remained for Dr. Waterland to take a comprehensive view of the whole question, and to leave to posterity not only an effective answer to Dr. Clarke, but a masterly and luminous exposition, the equal to which it would be difficult to find in any other author, ancient or modern. It would be wearisome even to enumerate the titles of the various 'Queries,' 'Vindications,' 'Replies,' 'Defences,' 'Answers to Replies,' which poured forth from the press in luxurious abundance on either side of the great controversy. It will be sufficient to indicate generally the main points at issue between the combatants.

Dr. Clarke then, and his friends[2] (who all wrote more or less under his inspiration), maintained that the worship of God is in Scripture appointed to one Being, that is, to the Father *personally*. That such worship as is due to Christ is the worship of a mediator and cannot possibly be that paid to the one supreme God. That all the titles given to the Son in the New Testament, and all powers ascribed to Him, are perfectly well consistent with reserving the supremacy of absolute and independent dominion to the Father alone. That the highest titles of God are never applied to the Son or Spirit. That the subordination of the Son to the Father is not merely nominal, consisting in the mere position or order of words, which in truth of things is a *co*-ordination; but that it is a *real* subordination in point of authority and dominion over the universe. That three persons, that is, three

[1] Potter also, subsequently Archbishop of Canterbury, entered into the lists against Clarke.

[2] Dr. Whitby (already favourably known in the theological world by his commentary on the Bible), Mr. Sykes, and Mr. Jackson, Vicar of Rossington and afterwards of Doncaster, &c.

intelligent agents in the same individual, identical substance, is a self-evident contradiction, and that the Nicene fathers, by the term Homoousion, did not mean one individual, identical substance. That the real difficulty in the conception of the Trinity is *not* how three persons can be one God, for Scripture nowhere expresses the doctrine in those words ; and the difficulty of understanding a Scripture doctrine ought not to lie wholly upon words not found in Scripture, but *how* and in what sense, consistently with everything that is affirmed in Scripture about Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, it is still certainly and infallibly true that to us there is but 'one God the Father' (1 Cor. viii. 6). That as to the claims of the Holy Ghost to be worshipped on an equality with the Father, there is really no one instance in Scripture of any direct act of adoration or invocation being paid to Him at all.

Such is the outline of the system of which Dr. Clarke was the chief exponent. The various arguments by which it was supported will be best considered in connection with that great writer who now comes under our notice—Dr. Waterland. Among the many merits of Waterland's treatment of the subject, this is by no means the least—that he pins down his adversary and all who hold the same views in any age to the real question at issue. Dr. Clarke, for example, admitted that Christ was, in a certain sense, Creator. 'Either, then,' argues Waterland, 'there are two authors and governors of the universe, *i.e.* two Gods, or not. If there are, why do you deny it of either ; if not, why do you affirm it of both?' Dr. Clarke thought that the divinity of Christ was analogous to the royalty of some petty prince, who held his power under a supreme monarch. 'I do not,' retorts Waterland, 'dispute against the notion of one king under another ; what I insist upon is that a great king and a little king make two kings ; (consequently a supreme God and an inferior God make two Gods).' Dr. Clarke did not altogether deny omniscience to be an attribute of Christ, but he affirmed it to be a relative omniscience, communicated to him from the Father. 'That is, in plain language,' retorted Waterland, 'the Son knows all things, except that He is ignorant of many things.' Dr. Clarke did not altogether deny the eternity of the Son. The Son is eternal, because we cannot conceive a time when He was not. 'A negative eternity,' replies Waterland, 'is no eternity ; angels might equally be termed eternal.'

One point on which Waterland insists constantly and strongly is that the scheme of those who would pay divine honours to Christ, and yet deny that He is very God, cannot escape from the charge of polytheism. 'You are tritheists,' he urges, 'in the same sense as Pagans are called polytheists. One supreme and

two inferior Gods is your avowed doctrine ; that is, three Gods. If those texts which exclude all but one God, exclude only supreme deities, and do not exclude any that are not supreme, by such an interpretation you have voided and frustrated every law of the Old Testament against idolatry.' Dr. Clarke and his friends distinguished between that supreme sovereign worship which was due to the Father only, and the mediate, relative, inferior worship which was due to others. 'What authority,' asks Waterland, 'is there in Scripture for this distinction? What rules are there to regulate the intention of the worshipper, so as to make worship high, higher, or highest as occasion requires? All religious worship is determined by Scripture and antiquity to be what you call absolute and sovereign.' 'Scripture and antiquity generally say nothing of a supreme God, because they acknowledge no inferior God. Such language was borrowed from the Pagans, and then used by Christian writers. So, too, was the notion of "mediatorial worship" borrowed from the Pagans, handed on by Arians, and brought down to our own times by Papists.'

But Dr. Clarke and his friends maintained that they were not Arians, for they did not make Christ a creature. 'Impossible,' replies Dr. Waterland ; 'you assert, though not directly, yet consequentially, that the Maker and Redeemer of the whole world is no more than a creature, that He is mutable and corruptible ; that He depends entirely upon the favour and good pleasure of God ; that He has a precarious existence and dependent powers, and is neither so perfect in His nature nor exalted in privileges but that it is in the Father's power to create another equal or superior. There is no middle between being essentially God and being a creature.' Dr. Clarke cannot find a medium between orthodoxy and Arianism. He has declared against the consubstantiality and proper divinity of Christ as well as His co-eternity. He cannot be neutral. In condemning Arians he has condemned himself. Nay, he has gone further than the Arians. 'Sober Arians will rise up in judgment and condemn you for founding Christ's worship so meanly upon I know not what powers given after His resurrection. They founded it upon reasons antecedent to His incarnation, upon His being God before the world, and Creator of the world of His own power.'

Waterland showed his strength in defence as well as in attack. He boldly grappled with the difficulties which the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity unquestionably involves, and his method of dealing with these difficulties forms not the least valuable part of his writings on the subject.

Into the labyrinths, indeed, of metaphysical speculation he

distinctly declined to follow his opponents. They, as well as he, acknowledged, or professed to acknowledge, the force of the testimony from Scripture and the fathers. He is ready to join issue on this point, 'Is the Catholic doctrine true?' but for resolving this question he holds that we must have recourse to Scripture and antiquity. 'Whoever debates this question should forbear every topic derived from the *nature* of things, because such arguments belong only to the other question, whether the doctrine be *possible*, and in all reason possibility should be presupposed in all our disputes from Scripture and the fathers.' He consistently maintains that our knowledge of the nature of God is far too limited to allow us to dogmatise from our own reason on such a subject. 'You can never fix any certain principles of individuation, therefore you can never assure me that three real persons are not one numerical or individual essence. You know not precisely what it is that makes one being, one essence, one substance.' There are other difficulties in the nature of the Godhead quite as great as any which the doctrine of the Trinity involves. 'The Omnipresence, the Incarnation, Self-existence, are all mysteries, and eternity itself is the greatest mystery of all. There is nothing peculiar to the Trinity that is near so perplexing as eternity.' And then he finely adds: 'I know no remedy for these things but a humble mind. If we demur to a doctrine because we cannot fully and adequately comprehend it, is not this too familiar from a creature towards his Creator, and articling more strictly with Almighty God than becomes us?'

Is the Trinity a mysterious doctrine? 'The tremendous Deity is all over mysterious, in His nature and in His attributes, in His works and in His ways. If not, He would not be divine. If we reject the most certain truths about the Deity, only because they are incomprehensible, when everything about Him must be so of course, the result will be Atheism; for there are mysteries in the works of nature as well as in the Word of God.'

If it be retorted, Why then introduce terms and ideas which by your own admission can only be imperfectly understood? Why not leave such mysteries in the obscurity in which they are shrouded, and not condemn those who are unable to accept without understanding them? The reply is, 'It is you and not we who are responsible for the discussion and definition of these mysteries. The faith of the Church was at first, and might be still, a plain, simple, easy thing, did not its adversaries endeavour to perplex and puzzle it with philosophical niceties. Early Christians did not trouble their heads with nice speculations about the *modus* of the Three in One.' 'All this discourse about *being* and *person* is foreign and not pertinent, because if both

these terms were thrown out, our doctrine would stand just as before, independent of them, and very intelligible without them. So it stood for about 150 years before *person* was heard of in it, and it was later before *being* was mentioned. Therefore, if all the objection be against these, however innocent, expressions, let the objectors drop the name and accept the thing.' It was no wish of Waterland to argue upon such mysteries at all. 'Perhaps,' he says, 'after all, it would be best for both of us to be silent when we have really nothing to say, but as you have begun, I must go on with the argument. . . . It is really not reasoning but running riot with fancy and imagination about matters infinitely surpassing human comprehension. You may go on till you reason, in a manner, God out of His attributes, and yourself out of your faith, and not know at last when to stop.' These are weighty and wise words, and it would be well if they were borne in mind by disputants on this profound mystery in every age. But while deprecating all presumptuous prying into the secret nature of God, Waterland is perfectly ready to meet his adversaries on that ground on which alone he thinks the question can be discussed.

Summing up and setting in one compendious view all that the modern Arians taught in depreciation of Christ, Waterland showed that in spite of their indignation at being represented as teaching that Christ was a mere creature, they yet clearly taught that He was 'brought into existence as well as any other creature, that He was precarious in existence, ignorant of much more than He knows, capable of change from strength to weakness, and from weakness to strength ; capable of being made wiser, happier, and better in every respect ; having nothing of his own, nothing but what He owes to the favour of His lord and governor.' By the arguments which they used to prove all this, they put a most dangerous weapon into the hands of Atheists, or at least into the hands of those who denied the existence of such a God as is revealed to us in Holy Scripture. 'Through your zeal against the divinity of the Son, you have betrayed the cause to the first bold Marcionite that shall deny the eternal Godhead of the Father and the Son, and assert some unknown God above both. The question was, whether a particular Person called the Father be the Eternal God. His being called God would amount to nothing, that being no more than a word of office. His being Creator, nothing ; that you could elude. His being Jehovah, of no weight, meaning no more than a person true and faithful to his promises. Almighty is capable of a subordinate sense. The texts which speak of eternity are capable of a subordinate sense. The term "first cause" is not a Scriptural expression.'

Waterland boldly faces the objection against the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity which was derived from certain texts of Scripture which taken by themselves might seem to favour the Arian view. How, for example, it was asked, could it be said that all power was *given* unto Christ (Matt. xxviii. 18), and that all things were put under His feet after His Resurrection (Eph. i. 22), if He was Lord long before? 'The Logos,' replies Waterland, 'was from the beginning Lord over all, but the God man (Θεάνθρωπος) was not so till after the Resurrection. Then He received in that capacity what He had ever enjoyed in another; He received full power in both natures which He had heretofore only in *one*.'[1] The passage on which the Arians insisted most of all, and which they constantly asserted to be by itself decisive of the whole question, is 1 Corinthians viii. 6. There, they asserted, the Son is excluded in most express words from being one with the Supreme God. Dr. Clarke told Waterland in downright terms that 'he should be ashamed when he considered that he falsified St. Paul, who said, "To us there is but one God, the Father."' 'But,' replies Dr. Waterland, 'do we who make the Son essentially the same God with that one, and suppose but one God in all, or you who make two Gods, and in the same *relative* sense, God *to us*, falsify St. Paul? *We* can give a reason why the Son is tacitly included, being so intimately united to the Father as partaker of the same divine nature, but that any creature should not be excluded from being God is strange.'

To turn now from Scripture to antiquity. The question as to what was the opinion of the ante-Nicene fathers had been so thoroughly handled by Bishop Bull, that Waterland (his legitimate successor) had no need to enter upon it at large over again. But Bishop Bull had done his work too well to suit the theory of Dr. Clarke and his friends. Although the latter professed to find in the early fathers a confirmation of their views, yet from a consciousness, perhaps, of the unsatisfactoriness of this confirmation they constantly depreciate the value of patristic evidence. In connection, therefore, with the subject of the Trinity, Waterland clearly points out what is and what is not the true character of the appeal to antiquity. The fathers are certain proofs in many cases of the Church's doctrine in that age, and probable proofs of what that doctrine was from the beginning. In respect of the latter they are inferior additional proofs when compared with plain Scripture proof; of no moment if Scripture is plainly contrary, but of great moment when Scrip-

[1] He proceeds to explain S. Matthew, xxiv. 36, S. Luke, ii. 52, and S. John, v. 19, in a sense consistent with the Catholic doctrine.

ture looks the same way, because they help to fix the true interpretation in disputed texts. Waterland, however, would build no article of faith on the fathers, but on Scripture alone. If the sense of Scripture be disputed, the concurring sentiments of the fathers in any doctrine will be generally the best and safest comments on Scripture, just as the practice of courts and the decisions of eminent lawyers are the best comments on an Act of Parliament made in or near their own times, though the obedience of subjects rests solely on the laws of the land as its rule and measure. To the objection that interpreting Scripture by the ancients is debasing its majesty and throwing Christ out of His throne, Waterland replies in somewhat stately terms, 'We think that Christ never sits more secure or easy on His throne than when He has His most faithful guards about Him, and that none are so likely to strike at His authority or aim at dethroning Him as they that would displace His old servants only to make way for new ones.' But this respect for the opinion of antiquity in no way involved any compromise of the leading idea of all eighteenth-century theology, that it should follow the guidance of reason. Reason was by no means to be sacrificed to the authority of the fathers. Indeed, 'as to authority,' he says, 'in a strict and proper sense I do not know that the fathers have any over us; they are all dead men; therefore we urge not their *authority* but their testimony, their suffrage, their judgment, as carrying great force of reason. Taking them in here as lights or helps *is* doing what is *reasonable* and using our own understandings in the best way.' 'I follow the fathers,' he adds, 'as far as reason requires and no further; therefore, this *is* following our own reason.' In an age when patristic literature was little read and lightly esteemed this forcible, and at the same time highly reasonable, vindication of its importance had a value beyond its bearing upon the doctrine of the Trinity, in connection with which the subject was introduced by our author.[1]

Here our notice of the points at issue between Dr. Waterland and the modern Arians, so far as they concerned the truth of the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, may fitly close. But there was yet another question closely connected with the above which it concerned the interests of morality, no less than of religion, thoroughly to sift. It was no easy task which Dr. Clarke and his friends undertook when they essayed to prove from Scripture and antiquity that the Son and Holy Ghost were not one with the supreme God. But they attempted a yet

[1] See vols. i. ii. and iii. *passim* of Waterland's *Works*, edited by Van Mildert.

harder task than this. They contended that their views were not irreconcilable with the formularies and Liturgy of the Church of England. The more candid and ingenuous mind of Whiston saw the utter hopelessness of this endeavour. It was, he says, an endeavour 'to wash the blackmore white,' and so, like an honest man as he was, he retired from her communion. Dr. Clarke could not, of course, deny that there was at least an apparent inconsistency between his views and those of the Church to which he belonged. One of the chapters in his 'Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity' is devoted to a collection of 'passages in the Liturgy which may seem in some respects to differ from the foregoing doctrine.' But he and his friends were 'ready to subscribe any test containing nothing more than is contained in the Thirty-nine Articles;' their avowed principle being that 'they may do it in their own sense agreeably to what they call Scripture.' In his 'Case of Arian Subscription' Dr. Waterland had no difficulty in showing the utter untenableness of this position. He maintained that 'as the Church required subscription to *her own* interpretation of Scripture, so the subscriber is bound to that and that only.' 'The rules,' he says, 'for understanding what her sense is are the same as for understanding oaths, laws, &c.—that is, the usual acceptation of words, the custom of speech at the time being, the scope of the writer from the controversies then on foot,' &c. It is but a shallow artifice for fraudulent subscribers to call their interpretation of Scripture, Scripture. The Church has as good a right to call her interpretation Scripture. Let the Arian sense be Scripture to Arians; but then let them subscribe only to Arian subscriptions.

The case of Arian subscriptions was really part of a larger question. There were some who, without actually denying the *truth* of the doctrine of the Trinity, doubted whether it was of sufficient *importance* or clearly enough revealed to make it a necessary article of the Christian faith. These were sometimes called Episcopians, a name derived from one Episcopius, an amiable and not unorthodox writer of the seventeenth century, who was actuated by a charitable desire to include as many as possible within the pale of the Christian Church, and to minimize the differences between all who would, in any sense, own the name of Christians. The prevalence of such views in Dr. Waterland's days led him to write one of his most valuable treatises in connection with the Trinitarian controversy. It was entitled, 'The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity Asserted,' and was addressed to those only who believed the *truth* of the doctrine but demurred to its importance. Waterland concludes this work, which is rather a practical than a controversial treatise,

with some wise words of caution to those persons of 'more warmth than wisdom,' who from a mistaken liberality would make light of heresy.

It is now time to close this sketch of the method in which this great writer—one of the few really great divines who belong to the eighteenth century—handled the mysterious subject of the Trinity. Not only from his profound learning and acuteness, but from the general cast of his mind, Waterland was singularly adapted for the work which he undertook. To treat this subject of all subjects, the faculties both of thinking clearly and of expressing thoughts clearly are absolutely essential. These two qualifications Dr. Waterland possessed in a remarkable degree. He always knew exactly what he meant, and he also knew how to convey his meaning to his readers. His style is nervous and lucid, and he never sacrifices clearness to the graces of diction. His very deficiencies were all in his favour. Had he been a man of a more poetical temperament he might have been tempted, like Platonists and neo-Platonists, to soar into the heights of metaphysical speculations and either lose himself or at least render it difficult for ordinary readers to follow him. But no one can ever complain that Dr. Waterland is obscure. We may agree or disagree with his views, but we can never be in doubt what those views are. Had Waterland been of a warmer and more excitable temperament he might have been tempted to indulge in vague declamation or in that personal abusiveness which was only too common in the theological controversies of the day. Waterland fell into neither of these snares; he always argues, never declaims; he is a hard hitter in controversy, but never condescends to scurrilous personalities. The very completeness of his defence of the doctrine of the Trinity against Arian assailants furnishes, perhaps, the reason why this part of his writings has not been so widely and practically useful as it deserves to be. He so effectually assailed the position of Dr. Clarke and his friends that it has rarely been occupied by opponents of the Catholic doctrine in modern days.

It has been thought desirable to present the great controversy in which Drs. Clarke and Waterland were respectively the leaders in one uninterrupted view. In doing so the order of events has been anticipated, and it is now necessary to revert to circumstances bearing upon the subject of this chapter which occurred long before that controversy closed.

Dr. Clarke's 'Scripture Doctrine' was published in 1712; Dr. Waterland did not enter into the arena until 1719; but five years before this latter date, Dr. Clarke was threatened with other weapons besides those of argument. In 1714, the Lower

House of Convocation made an application to the Upper House to notice the heretical opinions of Dr. Clarke on the subject of the Trinity. They submitted to the bishops several extracts, and also condemned the general drift of the book. The danger of ecclesiastical censures drew from Dr. Clarke a declaration in which he promised not to preach any more on such subjects, and also an explanation which almost amounted to a retractation; this he immediately followed by a paper delivered to the Bishop of London, half recanting and half explaining his explanations. These documents appear to have satisfied nobody except perhaps the bishops. The Lower House resolved 'that the paper subscribed by Dr. Clarke and communicated by the bishops to the Lower House doth not contain in it any recantation of the heretical assertions, &c., nor doth give such satisfaction for the great scandal occasioned by the said books as ought to put a stop to further examination thereof;' while his outspoken friend, Whiston, wrote to him, 'Your paper has occasioned real grief to myself and others, not because it is a real retractation, but because it is so very like one, yet is not, and seems to be penned with a plain intention only to ward off persecution,' and told him face to face that '*he* would not have given the like occasion of offence for all the world.' However, the bishops were satisfied and the matter proceeded no further.

Subsequently Dr. Clarke was taken to task by his diocesan, the Bishop of London, for altering the doxology into an accordance with Arianism. He was neither convinced nor silenced by Waterland; and though his influence may (as Van Mildert tells us) have perceptibly declined after the great controversy was closed, he was not left without followers, and maintained a high reputation which survived him. He was for many years known among a certain class of admirers as 'the great Dr. Clarke.' Among those who were at least interested in, if not influenced by the doctor was Queen Caroline, the clever wife of George II.

Nor was the excitement caused by the speculations of Dr. Clarke on the doctrine of the Trinity confined to the Church of England alone. It was the occasion of one of the fiercest disputes that ever arose among Nonconformists. Exeter was the first scene of the spread of Arianism among the Dissenters. Two ministers gave great offence to their congregations by preaching Arianism. The alarm of heresy spread rapidly, and there was so great an apprehension of its tainting the whole country that—strange as it may sound to modern ears—the judge at the county assize made the prevalence of Arianism the chief subject of his charge to the grand jury. Among Churchmen, some were alarmed lest the heresy should spread among their own body, while others

rather gloried in it as a natural result of schism. A statement of the case was sent to the dissenting ministers in the metropolis. The Presbyterian ministers at Exeter, in order to allay the panic, agreed to make a confession of faith, every one in his own words *viva voce*. This caused a revival of the old discussion as to whether confessions of faith should be made in any but Scripture language. The matter was referred to the ministers in London, and a meeting was held at Salters' Hall, at which the majority agreed to the general truth that 'there is but one living and true God, and that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are that one God.' Numbers, however, of the Presbyterians, and some of the Baptists, adhered to Arianism, and thence drifted into Socinianism or rather simple Unitarianism.

This, indeed, was the general course inside as well as outside the Church. The very name of Arian almost died out, and the name of Socinian took its place. The term Socinian is, however, misleading. It by no means implies that those to whom it was given agreed with the doctrine of Faustus Socinus. It was often loosely and improperly applied on the one hand to many who really believed more than he did, and on the other to many who believed less. In fact, the stigma of Socinianism was tossed about as a vague, general term of reproach in the eighteenth century, much in the same way as 'Puseyite,' 'Ritualist,' and 'Rationalist' have been in our own day. This very inaccurate use of the word Socinian may in part be accounted for by remembering that one important feature in the system of Socinus was his utter denial of the doctrine of the atonement or satisfaction made by Christ in any sense. 'Christ,' he said, 'is called a mediator not because He made peace between God and man, but because He was sent from God to man to explain the will of God and to make a covenant with them in the name of God. A mediator (*a medio*) is a middle person between God and man.'[1] Now there is abundance of evidence that before and at the time of the Evangelical revival in the Church of England, this doctrine of the atonement had been, if not denied, at least practically ignored. Bishop Horsley, in his Charge in 1790, complains of this; and in the writings of the early Evangelical party we find, of course, constant complaints of the general ignoring of these doctrines. Now it is probable that the term Socinian was often applied to those who kept these doctrines in the background, and not, indeed, applied altogether improperly; only, if we assume that all those who were termed Socinians disbelieved in the true divinity or personality of the Son and the Holy Ghost, we shall be assuming more than was really the case.

[1] Toulmin's *Memoirs of Faustus Socinus*, p. 191.

On the other hand, many were called Socinians who really believed far less than Socinus and the foreign Socinians did. It is true that Socinus 'regarded it as a mere human invention, not agreeable to Scripture and repugnant to reason, that Christ is the only begotten Son of God, because He and no one besides Him was begotten of the divine substance;'[1] but he also held that 'Scripture so plainly attributes a divine and sovereign power to Christ as to leave no room for a figurative sense.'[2] And the early Socinians thought that Christ must not only be obeyed but His assistance implored, and that He ought to be worshipped, that 'invocation of Christ or addressing prayers to Him was a duty necessarily arising from the character He sustained as head of the Church;' and that 'those who denied the invocation of Christ did not deserve to be called Christians.'[3]

Let us now return to the history of our own Socinians, or, as they preferred to be called, Unitarians; we shall soon see how far short they fell in point of belief of their foreign predecessors.

The heresy naturally spread more widely among Nonconformists than it could in the Church of England. As the biographer of Socinus remarks, 'The Trinitarian forms of worship which are preserved in the Church of England, and which are so closely incorporated with its services, must furnish an insuperable objection against conformity with all sincere and conscientious Unitarians.'[4] If the common sense and common honesty of Englishmen revolted against the specious attempts of Dr. Clarke and his friends to justify *Arian* subscription, a much more hopeless task would it have been to reconcile the further development of anti-Trinitarian doctrines with the formularies of the Church.

At the same time it must be admitted that the cessation or abatement of anti-Trinitarian efforts in the Church after the death of Dr. Clarke is not to be attributed solely to the firmness and earnestness of Churchmen's convictions on this subject. It arose, in part at least, from the general indisposition to stir up mooted questions. Men were disposed to rest satisfied with 'our happy establishment in Church and State;' and it was quite as much owing to the spiritual torpor which overtook the Church and nation after the third decade of the eighteenth century, as to strength of conviction, that the Trinitarian question was not further agitated.

Among the Nonconformists, and especially among the Pres-

[1] Toulmin's *Memoirs of Faustus Socinus*, p. 180. [2] Id. 211.
[3] Id. p. 467.
[4] Toulmin, p. 281. See also on this point Thomas Scott's interesting account of his own religious opinions in the *Force of Truth*, and in his biography by his son.

byterians, the case was different. The Arianism which led to the Salters' Hall conference drifted by degrees into Unitarianism pure and simple. Dr. Lardner was one of the earliest and most distinguished of those who belonged to this latter school. He passed through the stage of Arianism, but the mind of the author of 'The Credibility of Gospel History' was far too clear and logical to allow him to rest there, and he finally came to the conclusion that 'Jesus Christ was a mere man, but a man with whom God was, in a peculiar and extraordinary manner.' This is not the place to refer to the various Nonconformists, such as Caleb Fleming, Hugh Farmer, James Foster, Robert Robinson, John Taylor, and many others who diverged more or less from the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity. But the views of one Nonconformist whose name is a household word in the mouth of Churchmen and Dissenters alike, and some of whose hymns will live as long as the English language lives, claim at least a passing notice.

Isaac Watts belonged to the Independents, a sect which in the first half of the eighteenth century was less tainted with Socinianism than any of 'the three denominations.' His 'Treatise on the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity,' and that entitled 'The Arian invited to the Orthodox Faith,' were professedly written in defence of the Catholic doctrine. The former, like most of Dr. Watts's compositions, was essentially a popular work. 'I do not,' he writes, 'pretend to instruct the learned world. My design here was to write for private and unlearned Christians, and to lead them by the fairest and most obvious sense of Scripture into some acquaintance with the great doctrine of the Trinity.'[1] In some respects his work is very effective. One point especially he brings out more forcibly than almost any other writer of his day. It is what he calls 'the moral argument' for the Trinity. There is real eloquence in his appeal to the 'great number of Christians who, since the Apostles, under the influence of a belief in the Divinity of the Son and the Spirit, have paid divine honours to both, after they have sought the knowledge of the truth with the utmost diligence and prayer; when they have been in the holiest and most heavenly frames of spirit, and in their devoutest hours; when they have been under the most sensible impressions of the love of the Father and the Son, and under the most quickening influences of the Blessed Spirit himself; in the devotions of a death-bed, and in the songs and doxologies of martyrdom.' 'Now can we,' he asks, 'suppose that in such devout and glorious seasons as these, God the Father

[1] 'The Christian Doctrine of the Trinity,' by Isaac Watts, vol. vi. of *Works*, p. 155.

should ever thus manifest His own love to souls that are degrading Him by worshipping another God? That Christ Jesus should reveal Himself in His dying love to souls that are practising idolatry and worshipping Himself instead of the true God?'

But there are other passages of a very different tendency, in which Dr. Watts virtually gives up the whole point at issue, and apparently without being conscious that he is doing so. On the worship of the Holy Ghost, for example, he writes: 'There is great silence in Scripture of precepts or patterns of prayer and praise to the Holy Spirit.' 'Therefore,' he thinks, 'we should not bind it on our own consciences or on others as a piece of necessary worship, but rather practise it occasionally as prudence and expediency may require.'[1] On the famous question of the Homoousion, he thinks 'it is hard to suppose that the eternal generation of the Son of God as a distinct person, yet co-equal and consubstantial or of the same essence with the Father, should be made a fundamental article of faith in the dawn of the Gospel.' He is persuaded therefore 'that faith in Him as a divine Messiah or all-sufficient and appointed Saviour is the thing required in those very texts where He is called the Son of God and proposed as such for the object of our belief: and that a belief of the natural and eternal and consubstantial sonship of Christ to God as Father was not made the necessary term or requisite of salvation:' neither can he 'find it asserted or revealed with so much evidence in any part of the Word of God as is necessary to make it a fundamental article of faith.'[2] And once more, on the Personality of the Holy Ghost, he writes: 'The general and constant language of Scripture speaks of the Holy Ghost as a power or medium of divine operation.' Some places may speak of him as personal, but 'it was the frequent custom of Jews and Oriental nations to speak of powers and qualities under personal characters.' He can find 'no plain and express instance in Holy Scripture of a doxology directly and distinctly addressed to the Holy Spirit,' and he thinks the reason of this may be 'perhaps because he is only personalised by idioms of speech.'[3]

Now anyone who has studied the course of the Trinitarian controversy will see at once that an anti-Trinitarian would require no farther concessions than these to prove his point quite unanswerably. The amiable design of Dr. Watts's second treatise was 'to lead an Arian by soft and easy steps into a belief of the divinity of Christ,'[4] but if he granted what he did, the Arian

[1] 'The Christian Doctrine of the Trinity,' by Isaac Watts, vol. vii. of *Works*, p. 196. [2] Watts, p. 200.
[3] 'The Arian Invited to an Orthodox Faith.'—*Works*, vol. vi. p. 348.
[4] Id. 225.

would have led him, if the controversy had been pushed to its logical results.

To return to the Church of England. About the middle of the eighteenth century there was a revival of one phase of the Trinitarian controversy. A movement arose to procure the abolition of subscription to the Articles and Liturgy. The spread of Unitarian opinions among the clergy is said to have originated this movement, though probably this was not the sole cause. One of the most active promoters of this attempt was Archdeacon Blackburne; he was supported by Clayton, Bishop of Clogher, who boldly avowed that his object was to open the door for different views upon the Trinity in the Church. His own views on this subject expressed in a treatise entitled 'An Essay on Spirit' were certainly original and startling. He held that the Logos was the Archangel Michael, and the Holy Spirit the angel Gabriel!

This treatise and that of Blackburne, entitled 'The Confessional,' called forth the talents of an eminent Churchman in defence of the received doctrine of the Trinity—Jones of Nayland. His chief work on the subject was entitled 'The Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity,' and was drawn up after the model of Dr. Clarke's famous book, to which, indeed, it was partly intended to be an antidote. It was written on the principle that Scripture is its own best interpreter, and consisted of a series of well-chosen texts marshalled in order with a brief explanation of each, showing its application to the doctrine of the Trinity. On one point Jones insists with great force, viz., that every article of the Christian faith depends upon the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity; and he illustrates this by applying it to 'our creation, redemption, sanctification, resurrection, and glorification by the power of Christ and the Holy Spirit.'[1] Jones did, perhaps, still more useful if less pretentious work in publishing two little pamphlets, the one entitled 'A Letter to the Common People in Answer to some Popular Arguments against the Trinity,' the other 'A Preservative against the Publications dispersed by Modern Socinians.' Both of these set forth the truth, as he held it, in a very clear and sensible manner, and at a time when the Unitarian doctrines were spreading widely among the multitudes who could not be supposed to have either the time or the talents requisite to grapple with long, profound, and elaborate arguments, they were very seasonable publications.

But the most curious contribution which Jones made to the

[1] Address to the Reader, p. viii. prefixed to *The Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity*.

Trinitarian controversy was a pamphlet entitled 'A Short Way to Truth, or the Christian Doctrine of a Trinity in Unity, Illustrated and Confirmed from an Analogy in the Natural Creation.' He shows that the powers of nature by which all natural life and motion are preserved are three—air, fire, and light. That these three thus subsisting together in unity are applied in Scripture to the Three Persons of the Divine Nature, and that the manifestations of God are always made under one or other of these signs. These three agents support the life of man. There is a Trinity in the body (1) the heart and blood-vessels; (2) the organs of respiration; (3) the nerves, the instruments of sensation; these three departments are the three moving principles of nature continually acting for the support of life. 'Therefore,' he concludes, 'as the life of man is a Trinity in Unity, and the powers which act upon it are a Trinity in Unity, the Socinians being, in their natural capacity, formed and animated as Christians, carry about with them daily a confutation of their own unbelief.'[1]

In the year 1782, the Trinitarian controversy received a fresh impulse from the appearance in it of a writer whose eminence in other branches of knowledge lent an adventitious importance to what he wrote upon this subject. In that year, Dr. Priestley published his 'History of the Corruptions of Christianity,' which, as Horsley says, was 'nothing less than an attack upon the creeds and established discipline of every church in Christendom.' Foremost among these corruptions were both the Catholic doctrine of our Lord's divinity and the Arian notion of His pre-existence in a state far above the human.

The great antagonist of Dr. Priestley was Dr. Horsley, who, first in a Charge to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of St. Albans, and then in a series of letters addressed to Priestley himself, maintained with conspicuous ability the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity.

An able modern writer[2] says that the Unitarian met at the hands of the bishop much the same treatment as Collins had received from Bentley. But the comparison scarcely does justice either to Horsley or Priestley. From a purely intellectual point of view it would be a compliment to any man to compare him with 'Philelcutherus Lipsiensis,' but the brilliant wit and profound scholarship displayed in Bentley's remarks on Collins were tarnished by a scurrility and personality which, even artistically speaking, injured the merits of the work, and were quite unworthy

[1] Jones of Nayland's *Theological Works*, vol. i. p. 214, &c.
[2] Hunt's *History of Religious Thought*, iii. 349.

of being addressed by one gentleman (not to say clergyman) to another. Horsley's strictures are as keen and caustic as Bentley's: but there is a dignity and composure about him which, while adding to rather than detracting from the pungency of his writings, prevent him from forgetting his position and condescending to offensive invectives. Priestley, too, was a more formidable opponent than Collins. He was not only a man who by his scientific researches had made his mark upon his age, but he had set forth Unitarianism far more fully and powerfully than Collins had set forth Deism. Still he unquestionably laid himself open to attack, and his opponent did not fail to take advantage of this opening.

Horsley distinctly declines to enter into the general controversy as to the truth or possibility of the Christian Trinity. Everything, he thinks, that can be said on either side has been said long ago. But he is ready to join issue with Priestley on the historical question. This he feels it practically necessary to do, for 'the whole energy and learning of the Unitarian party is exerted to wrest from us the argument from tradition.'[1]

He shows, then, that so far from all the Church being originally Unitarian, there was no Unitarian before the end of the second century, when Theodotus, 'the learned tanner of Byzantium,' who had been a renegade from the faith, taught for the first time that His humanity was the whole of Christ's condition, and that He was only exalted to Heaven like other good men. He owns that the Cerinthians and Ebionites long before that had affirmed that Jesus had no existence previous to Mary's conception, and was literally and physically the carpenter's son, and so asserted the mere humanity of the Redeemer, 'but,' he adds, 'they admitted I know not what unintelligible exaltation of His nature upon His Ascension by which He became no less the object of worship than if His nature had been originally divine.'[2] He acknowledges that the Cerinthian Gnostics denied the proper divinity of Christ, but, he adds very pertinently, 'if you agree with me in these opinions, it is little to your purpose to insist that Justin Martyr's reflections are levelled only at the Gnostics.'[3]

Like Waterland, and indeed all defenders of the Catholic doctrine, Horsley fully admits the difficulties and mysteriousness of his subject, 'but,' he asks, 'is Christianity clear of difficulties in any of the Unitarian schemes? Hath the Arian hypothesis no difficulty when it ascribes both the first formation and perpetual government of the Universe not to the Deity, but an inferior being? In the Socinian scheme is it no difficulty that

[1] *Charge*, p. 67. [2] Id. 43, &c. [3] *Letter X. to Dr. Priestley*, p. 183.

the capacity of a mere man should contain that wisdom by which God made the universe?'[1]

Horsley rebukes his opponent in severe and dignified language for presuming to write on a subject on which, by his own confession, he was ignorant of what had been written. In reply to a passage in Horsley's 'Charge,' in which it was asserted that Priestley's opinions in general were the same as those propagated by Daniel Zuicker, and that his arguments were in essential points the same as Episcopius had used, Priestley had said that he had never heard of Zuicker, and knew little of Episcopius; he also let slip that he had only 'looked through' the ancient fathers and the writings of Bishop Bull, an unfortunate phrase, which Horsley is constantly casting in his teeth.[2] On the positive proofs of his own position, Horsley cites numerous passages from the ante-Nicene fathers. He contends that in the famous passage of Tertullian on which Priestley had laid so much stress, Tertullian meant by 'idiotæ,' not the general body of unlearned Christians, but some stupid people who could not accept the great mystery which was generally accepted by the Church. He shows that the Jews in Christ's time *did* believe in a Trinity, and expected the Second Person to come as their Messiah. He maintains that when Athanasius spoke of Jews who held the simple humanity of Christ, he meant what he said, viz., Jews simply, not Christian Jews, as Priestley asserted.

There is a fine irony in some of his remarks on Priestley's interpretations of Scripture. 'To others,' he says in his 'Charge,' 'who have not the sagacity to discern that the true meaning of an inspired writer must be the reverse of the natural and obvious sense of the expressions which he employs, the force of the conclusion that the Primitive Christians could not believe our Lord to be a mere man because the Apostles had told them He was Creator of the Universe (Colossians i. 15, 17) will be little understood.'[3] In the famous text which speaks of Christ as 'come in the flesh,' for 'come *in* the flesh' Priestley substitutes 'come *of* the flesh.' 'The one,' says Horsley, 'affirms an Incarnation, the other a mortal extraction. The first is St. John's assertion, the second Dr. Priestley's. Perhaps Dr. Priestley hath discovered of St. John, as of St. Paul, that his reasoning is sometimes inconclusive and his language inaccurate, and he might think it no unwarrantable liberty to correct an expression, which, as not perfectly corresponding with his own system, he could not entirely approve. It would have been fair to advertise his reader of so capital an emendation, an emendation for which no support is to be found

[1] *Letters to Dr. Priestley*, p. 249. [2] *Letters*, &c. p. 91, &c.
[3] *Charge*, p. 14.

in the Greek Testament or any variety of manuscripts.'[1] In a similar tone, he trusts 'that the conviction of the theological student that his philosophy is Plato's, and his creed St. John's, will alleviate the mortification he might otherwise feel in differing from Dr. Priestley.'[2]

One of the most important and interesting parts of Horsley's letters was that in which he discussed the old objection raised by Priestley that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity was borrowed from Plato. There is, and Horsley does not deny it, a certain resemblance between the Platonic and the Christian theories. The Platonist asserted three Divine hypostases, the Good Being (*τἀγαθόν*), the word or reason (*λόγος* or *νοῦς*), and the Spirit (*ψυχή*) that actuates or influences the whole system of the Universe (*anima mundi*), which had all one common Deity (*τὸ θεῖον*), and were eternal and necessarily existent.[3] Horsley can see no derogation to Christianity in the resemblance of this theory to that of the Christian Trinity. He thinks that the advocates of the Catholic Faith in modern times have been too apt to take alarm at the charge of Platonism. 'I rejoice,' he says, 'and glory in the opprobrium. I not only confess, but I maintain, not a perfect agreement, but such a similitude as speaks a common origin, and affords an argument in confirmation of the Catholic doctrine for its conformity to the most ancient and universal traditions.'[4] For was this idea of a Triad peculiar to Plato? or did it originate with him? 'The Platonists,' says Horsley, 'pretended to be no more than expositors of a more ancient doctrine which is traced from Plato to Parmenides; from Parmenides to his master of the Pythagorean sect; from the Pythagoreans to Orpheus, the earliest of Grecian mystagogues; from Orpheus to the secret lore of Egyptian priests in which the foundations of the Orphic theology were laid. Similar notions are found in the Persian and Chaldean theology; even in Roman superstition from their Trojan ancestors. In Phrygia it was introduced by Dardanus, who carried it from Samothrace.' In short, 'the Trinity was a leading principle in all ancient schools of philosophy and religion.'[5]

Not, of course, that Horsley approved of the attempts made at the close of the second century to meet the Platonists half-way by professing that the leading doctrines of the Gospel were con-

[1] *Charge*, p. 17.
[2] Id. p. 73.
[3] See Maimbourg's *History of Arianism*, i. 6, note 3.
[4] *Letters*, p. 215.
[5] *Charge*, p. 43. Horsley rather lays himself open in this passage to the charge of confounding history with mythology; but probably all he meant was to show the extreme antiquity of Trinitarian notions.

tained in Plato's writings. He strongly condemned, *e.g.*, the conceit of the Platonic Christians that the external display of the powers of the Son in the business of Creation is the thing intended in Scripture language under the figure of his generation. 'There is no foundation,' he thinks, 'in Holy Writ, and no authority in the opinions and doctrines of preceding ages. It betrayed some who were most wedded to it into the use of very improper language, as if a new relation between the First and Second Persons took place when the creative powers were first exerted.' He condemns 'the indiscretion of presuming to affix a determinate meaning upon a figurative expression of which no particular exposition can be drawn safely from Holy Writ.' 'But,' he adds, 'the conversion of an attribute into a person, whatever Dr. Priestley may imagine, is a notion to which they were entire strangers.' On the main question of the Trinity he asserts, in opposition to Dr. Priestley, that they were quite sound.

Adopting the same line of argument which Leslie had used before him, Horsley dexterously turns the supposed resemblance between Platonism and Christianity, which, as has been seen, he admits, into a plain proof that the doctrine of the Trinity cannot be such a contradiction as the Unitarians represented it to be.

The controversy between Priestley and Horsley brings us nearly to the close of the eighteenth century. There had been a considerable secession of English clergymen to the Unitarians,[1] and Horsley's masterly tracts were a very opportune defence of the Catholic doctrine. On one point he and his adversary thoroughly concurred—viz., that there could be no medium between making Christ a mere man and owning Him to be in the highest sense God. Arianism in its various forms had become by this time well-nigh obsolete in England. It was a happy thing for the Church that this point had been virtually settled. The alternative was now clearly set before English Churchmen—'Choose ye whom ye will serve; if Christ be God, follow him; if not, be prepared to give up all notions of a creature worship.' The Unitarians at the close of the eighteenth century all took their stand on this issue. Such rhapsodies as those which were indulged in by early Socinians as well as Arians were now unheard. The line of demarcation was strictly drawn between those who did and those who did not believe in the true Godhead and distinct personality of the Second and Third Persons of the Blessed Trinity, so that from henceforth men might know on what ground they were standing.

[1] Evanson, Disney, Jebb, Gilbert Wakefield, &c.

Here the sketch of this famous controversy, which was certainly a marked feature of the eighteenth century, may fitly close. But a few general remarks in conclusion seem requisite.

And first as to the nomenclature. The name claimed by the anti-Trinitarians has, for want of a better, been perforce adopted in the foregoing pages. But in calling them unitarians, we must do so under protest. The advocates of the Catholic doctrine might with equal correctness be termed, from one point of view, Unitarians, as they are from another point of view termed Trinitarians. For they believe in the Unity of God as firmly as they believe in the Trinity. And they hold that there is no real contradiction in combining those two subjects of belief; because the difficulty of reconciling the Trinity with the Unity of the Godhead in reality proceeds simply from our human and necessary incapacity to comprehend the nature of the union. Therefore they cannot for a moment allow to disbelievers in the Trinity the title of Unitarians, so as to imply that the latter monopolise the grand truth that 'the Lord our God is one Lord.' They consent reluctantly to adopt the term Unitarian because no other name has been invented to describe the stage at which anti-Trinitarians had arrived before the close of the eighteenth century. These latter, of course, differed essentially from the Arians of the earlier part of the century. Neither can they be properly termed Socinians, for Socinus, as Horsley justly remarks, 'though he denied the original divinity of Our Lord, was nevertheless a worshipper of Christ, and a strenuous asserter of his right to worship. It was left to others,' he adds, 'to build upon the foundation which Socinus laid, and to bring the Unitarian doctrine to the goodly form in which the present age beholds it.'[1] Indeed, the early Socinians would have denied to Dr. Priestley and his friends the title of Christians, and would have excommunicated them from their Society. 'Humanitarians' would be a more correct designation; but as that term is already appropriated to a very different signification, it is not available. For convenience' sake, therefore, the name of Unitarians must be allowed to pass, but with the proviso that so far from its holders being the sole possessors of the grand truth of the unity of the Godhead, they really, from the fact of their denying the divinity of two out of the three Persons in the Godhead, form only a very maimed and inadequate conception of the one God.

The outcry against all mystery, or, to use a modern phrase, the spirit of rationalism, which in a good or bad sense pervaded the whole domain of religious thought, orthodox and unorthodox

[1] *Letters*, &c. 243.

alike during the eighteenth century, found its expression in one class of minds in Deism, in another in anti-Trinitarianism. But though both disavowed any opposition to real Christianity, yet both in reality allow no scope for what have been from the very earliest times to the present day considered essential doctrines of the Gospel. If the Deist strikes at the very root of Christianity by questioning the evidence on which it rests, no less does the Unitarian divest it of everything distinctive—of the divine condescension shown in God taking our nature upon Him, of the divine love shown in God's unseen presence even now in His Church by His Holy Spirit. Take away these doctrines, and there will be left indeed a residuum of ethical teaching, which some may please to call Christianity if they will; but it differs as widely from what countless thousands have understood and still understand by the term, as a corpse differs from a living man.

J. H. O.

CHAPTER VII.

ENTHUSIASM.

Few things are more prominent in the religious history of England in the eighteenth century, than the general suspicion entertained against anything that passed under the name of enthusiasm. It is not merely that the age was, upon the whole, formal and prosaic, and that in general society serenity and moderation stood disproportionately high in the list of virtues. No doubt zeal was unpopular; but, whatever was the case in the more careless language of conversation, zeal is not what the graver writers of the day usually meant when they inveighed against enthusiasts. They are often very careful to guard themselves against being thought to disparage religious fervour. Good and earnest men, no less than others, often spoke of enthusiasm as a thing to be greatly avoided. Nor was it only fanaticism, though this was especially odious to them. Some to whom they imputed the charge in question were utterly removed from anything like fanatical extravagance. The term was expressive of certain modes of thought and feeling rather than of practice. Under this theological aspect it forms a very important element in the Church history of the period, and is well worthy of attentive consideration.

Enthusiasm no longer bears quite the same meaning that it used to do. A change, strongly marked by the impress of reaction from the prevailing tone of eighteenth-century feeling,

has gradually taken place in the usual signification of the word. In modern language we commonly speak of enthusiasm in contrast, if not with lukewarmness and indifference, at all events with a dull prosaic level of commonplace thought or action. A slight notion of extravagance may sometimes remain attached to it, but on the whole we use the words in a decidedly favourable sense, and imply in it that generous warmth of impetuous, earnest feeling without which few great things are done. This meaning of the word was not absolutely unknown in the eighteenth century, and here and there a writer may be found to vindicate its use as a term of praise rather than of reproach. It might be applied to poetic[1] rapture with as little offence as though a bard were extolled as fired by the muses or inspired by Phœbus. But applied to graver topics, it was almost universally a term of censure. The original derivation of the word was generally kept in view. It is only within the last one or two generations that it has altogether ceased to convey any distinct notion of a supernatural presence—an afflatus from the Deity. But whereas the early Alexandrian fathers who first borrowed the word from Plato and the ancient mysteries had Christianised it and cordially adopted it in a favourable signification, it was now employed in a hostile sense as 'a misconceit of inspiration.'[2] It thus became a sort of byeword, applied in opprobrium and derision to all who laid claim to a spiritual power or divine guidance, such as appeared to the person by whom the term of reproach was used, fanatical extravagance, or, at the least, an unauthorised outstepping of all rightful bounds of reason. Its preciser meaning differed exceedingly with the mind of the speaker and with the opinions to which it was applied. It sometimes denoted the wildest and most credulous fanaticism or the most visionary mysticism ; on the other hand, the irreligious, the lukewarm, and the formalist often levelled the reproach of enthusiasm, equally with that of bigotry, at what ought to have been regarded as sound spirituality, or true Christian zeal, or the anxious efforts of thoughtful and religious men to find a surer standing ground against the reasonings of infidels and Deists.

A word which has not only been strained by constant and reckless use in religious contests, but is also vague in application and changeable in meaning, might seem marked out for

[1] Or to a painter's imagination. The *Idler*, not however without some fear of 'its wild extravagances' even in this sphere, allows that 'one may very safely recommend a little more enthusiasm to the modern painters ; too much is certainly not the vice of the present age.'—No. 79.

[2] Henry More, *Enthus. Triumphatus*, § 4.

special avoidance. Yet it might be difficult to find a more convenient expression under which to group various forms of subjective, mystic, and emotional religion, which were in some cases strongly antagonistic to one another, but were closely allied in principle and agreed also in this, that they inevitably brought upon their supporters the unpopular charge of enthusiasm. All were more or less at variance with the general spirit of the century. But, in one shape or another, they entered into almost every religious question that was agitated; and, in many cases, it is to the men who in their own generation were called mystics and enthusiasts that we must chiefly turn, if we would find in the eighteenth century a suggestive treatment of some of the theological problems which are most deeply interesting to men of our own time.

When Church writers no longer felt bound to exert all their powers of argument against Rome or rival modes of Protestantism, and when disputes about forms of government, rites, and ceremonies, and other externals of religion ceased to excite any strong interest, attention began to be turned in good earnest to the deeper and more fundamental issues involved in the Reformation. There arose a great variety of inquiries as to the principles and grounds of faith. Into all of these entered more or less directly the important question, How far man has been endowed with a faculty of spiritual discernment independent of what is properly called reason. It was a subject which could not be deferred, although at this time encompassed by special difficulties and beset by prejudices. The doctrine of 'the inner light' has been in all ages the favourite stronghold of enthusiasts and mystics of every kind, and this was more than enough to discredit it. All the tendencies of the age were against allowing more than could be helped in favour of a tenet which had been employed in support of the wildest extravagances, and had held the place of highest honour among the opinions of the early Quakers, the Anabaptists, the Muggletonians, the Fifth Monarchy men, and other fanatics of recent memory. Did not the very meaning of the word 'enthusiasm,' as well as its history, point plainly out that it is grounded on the belief in such inward illumination? And who, with the examples of the preceding age before him, could foretell to what dangerous extremes enthusiasm might lead its excited followers? Whenever, therefore, any writers of the eighteenth century had occasion to speak of man's spiritual faculties, one anxiety was constantly present to their minds. Enthusiasm seemed to be regarded with continual uneasiness, as a sort of unseen enemy, whom an incautious expression might let in unawares, unless they watchfully guarded and

circumscribed the province which it had claimed as so especially its own.

It is certainly remarkable that a subject which excited so much apprehension should have entered, nevertheless, into almost every theological discussion. Yet it could not be otherwise. Controversy upon the grounds of faith and all secondary arguments and inferences connected with it gather necessarily round four leading principles—Reason, Scripture, Church Authority, Spiritual Illumination. Throughout the century, the relation more particularly of the last of these principles to the other three, became the real, though often unconfessed centre alike of speculation and of practical theology. What is this mystic power which had been so extravagantly asserted—in comparison with which Scripture, Reason, and Authority had been almost set aside as only lesser lights? Is there indeed such a thing as a Divine illumination, an inner light, a heavenly inspiration, a directing principle within the soul? If so—and that there is in man a spiritual presence of some kind no Christian doubts—what are its powers? how far is it a rule of faith? What is its rightful province? What are its relations to faith and conscience? to Reason, Scripture, Church Authority? Can it be implicitly trusted? By what criterion may its utterances be distinguished and tested? Such, variously stated, were the questions asked, sometimes jealously and with suspicion, often from a sincere, unprejudiced desire to ascertain the truth, and often from an apprehension of their direct practical and devotional value. The inquiry, therefore, was one which formed an important element both in the divinity and philosophy of the period, and also in its popular religious movements. It was discussed by Locke and by every succeeding writer who, throughout the century, endeavoured to mark the powers and limits of the human understanding. It entered into most disputes between Deists and evidence writers as to the properties of evidence and the nature of Reasonable Religion. It had to do with debates upon inspiration, upon apostolic gifts, upon the Canon of Scripture, with controversies as to the basis of the English Church and of the Reformation generally, the essentials and nonessentials of Christianity, the rights of the individual conscience, toleration, comprehension, the authority of the Church, the authority of the early fathers. It had immediate relation to the speculations of the Cambridge Platonists, and their influence on eighteenth-century thought, upon such subjects as those of immutable morality and the higher faculties of the soul. It was conspicuous in the attention excited in England, both among admirers and opponents, by the reveries of Fénelon, Guyon, Bourignon, and other foreign Quietists. It was

a central feature of the animated controversy maintained by Leslie and others with the Quakers, a community who, at the beginning of the century, had attained the zenith of their numerical power. It was further illustrated in writings upon the character of enthusiasm elicited by the extravagances of the so-called French Prophets. In its aspect of a discussion upon the supra-sensual faculties of the soul, it received some additional light from the transcendental conceptions of Bishop Berkeley's philosophy. In its relation with mediæval mysticism on the one hand and with some distinctive aspects of modern thought on the other, it found an eminent exponent in the suggestive pages of William Law ; with whom must be mentioned his admirer and imitator, the poet John Byrom. The influence of the Moravians upon the early Methodists, the controversy of Wesley with Law, the progress of Methodism and Evangelicalism, the opposition which they met, the ever-repeated charge of 'enthusiasm,' and the anxiety felt on the other side to rebut the charge, exhibit the subject under some of its leading practical aspects. From yet another point of view, a similar reawakening to the keen perception of other faculties than those of reason and outward sense is borne witness to in the rise of a new school of imaginative art and poetry, in livelier sympathy with the more spiritual side of nature, in eager and often exaggerated ideals of what might be possible to humanity. Lastly, there remains to notice the very important influence exercised upon English thought by Coleridge, not only by the force of his own somewhat mystic temperament, but by his familiarity with such writers as Kant, Lessing, Schleiermacher, and Schelling, who had studied far more profoundly than any English philosophers or theologians, the relation of man's higher understanding to matters not cognisable by the ordinary powers of human reason.

But it is time to enter somewhat further into detail on some of the points briefly suggested. Reference was made to the Cambridge Platonists, for although they belong to the history of the seventeenth century, some of their opinions bear too directly on the subject to be entirely passed over. Moreover, Cudworth's 'Immutable Morality' was not published till 1731, at which time it had direct reference to the controversies excited by Mandeville's 'Fable of the Bees.' The popularity also of Henry More's writings continued into the century after his death, and a new edition of his 'Discourse of Enthusiasm' appeared almost simultaneously with writings of Lord Shaftesbury, Dr. Hickes, and others upon the same subject. It might have been well if the works of such men as H. More and Cudworth, J. Smith and Norris, had made a deeper impression on eighteenth-century

thought. Their exalted but restrained mysticism and their lofty system of morality was the very corrective which the tone of the age most needed. And it might have been remembered to great advantage, that the doctrine of an inner light, far from being only the characteristic tenet of the fanatical disciples of Fox and Münzer, had been held in a modified sense by men who, in the preceding generation, had been the glory of the English Church – a band of men conspicuous for the highest culture, the most profound learning, the most earnest piety, the most kindly tolerance. Cudworth, at all events, held this view. Engaged as he was, during a lengthened period of intellectual activity, in combating a philosophical system which, alike in theology, morals, and politics, appeared to him to sap the foundations of every higher principle in human nature, he was led by the whole tenour of his mind to dwell upon the existence in the soul of perceptions not derivable from the senses, and to expatiate on the immutable distinctions of right and wrong. Goodness, freed from all debasing associations of interest and expedience, such as Hobbes sought to attach to it, was the same, he was well assured, as it had existed from all eternity in the mind of God. To a mind much occupied in such reflections, and nurtured in the sublime thoughts of Plato, the doctrine of an inner light naturally commended itself. All goodness of which man is capable is a participation of the Divine essence – an effluence, as it were, from God ; and if knowledge is communicable through other channels than those of the outward senses, what is there which should forbid belief in the most immediate intercourse between the soul and its Creator, and in a direct intuition of spiritual truth ? We may attain a certain comprehension of the Deity, 'proportionate to our measure ; as we may approach near to a mountain, and touch it with our hands, though we cannot encompass it all round and enclasp it within our arms.' In fact, Cudworth's general train of reasoning and of feeling brought him into great sympathy with the mystics, though he was under little temptation of falling into the extravagances which had lately thrown their special tenets into disrepute. He did not fail, indeed, to meet with some of the customary imputations of enthusiasm, pantheism, and the like. But an ordinary reader will find in him few of the characteristic faults of mystic writers and many of their merits. In him, as in his fellow Platonists, there is little that is visionary, there is no disparagement of reason, no exaggerated strain of self-forgetfulness. On the other hand, he resembles the best mystics in the combination of high imaginative with intellectual power, in warmth of piety, in fearlessness and purity of motive. He resembles them too in the vehemence with which he denies the liberty of inter-

preting Scripture in any sense which may appear to attribute to God purposes inconsistent with our moral perceptions of goodness and justice—in his horror of the more pronounced doctrines of election—in his deep conviction that love to God and man is the core of Christianity—in his disregard for controversy on minor points of orthodoxy, and in the comprehensive tolerance and love of truth and liberty which should be the natural outgrowth of such opinions.

The other Cambridge Platonist whose writings may be said to have a distinct bearing on the subject and period before us, is Henry More. Even if there were no trace of the interest with which his works continued to be read in the earlier part of the eighteenth century, it would still seem like an omission if his treatise upon the question under notice were passed over. For perhaps there never was an author more qualified than he was to speak of 'enthusiasm' in a sympathetic but impartial spirit. He felt himself that the subject was well suited to him. 'I must,' he said, 'ingenuously confess that I have a natural touch of enthusiasm in my complexion, but such, I thank God, as was ever governable enough, and have found at length perfectly subduable.' He was in truth, both by natural temperament and by the course which his studies had taken, thoroughly competent to enter into the mind of the mystics and enthusiasts against whom he wrote. It was perhaps only his sound intellectual training, combined with the English attribute of solid practical sense, that had saved him from running utterly wild in fanciful and visionary speculations. As it is, he has been occasionally [1] classed among the so-called Theosophists, such as Paracelsus and Jacob Behmen. His exuberant imagination delighted in subjects which, since his time, have been acknowledged to be closed to all efforts of human reason, and have been generally abandoned to the dreams of credulity and superstition. He revelled in ingenious conjectures upon the condition of the soul in the intermediate state after death, upon the different stages and orders of disembodied spirits, and upon mysterious sympathies between mind and matter. We have continually to remember that he wrote before the dawn of the Newtonian philosophy, if we would appreciate his reasonings and guesses about strange attractions and affinities, which pointed as he thought to an incorporeal soul of the world, or spirit of nature, acting as 'a great quartermaster-general of Providence' in directing relations between the spiritual and material elements of the universe.[2]

[1] *Quarterly Review*, xxviii. 37.

[2] H. More, *On the Immortality of the Soul*, b. iii. ch. 12; and the whole treatise, especially the third and fourth books.

Such was Henry More in one side of his character. The counterbalancing principle was his unwavering allegiance to reason, his zealous acknowledgment of its excellence as a gift of God, to be freely used and safely followed on every subject of human interest. He held it to be the glory and adornment of all true religion, and the special prerogative of Christianity. He nowhere rises to greater fervour of expression than where he extols the free and devotional exercise of reason in a pure and undefiled heart; and he is convinced of the high and special spiritual powers which under such conditions are granted to it. 'I should commend to them that will successfully philosophise the belief and endeavour after a certain principle more noble and inward than reason itself, and without which reason will falter, or at least reach but to mean and frivolous things. I have a sense of something in me while I thus speak, which I must confess is of so retruse a nature that I want a name for it, unless I should adventure to term it Divine sagacity, which is the first rise of successful reason. . . . . All pretenders to philosophy will indeed be ready to magnify reason to the skies, to make it the light of heaven, and the very oracle of God: but they do not consider that the oracle of God is not to be heard but in his Holy Temple, that is to say, in a good and holy man, thoroughly sanctified in spirit, soul, and body.'[1]

Believing thus with all his heart both in the excellence of reason and in a true inspiration of the spirit granted to the pure in heart, but never dissociating the latter from the former; well convinced that 'Christian religion is rational throughout,' and that the suggestions of the Holy Spirit are in all cases agreeable to reason More wrote with much force and beauty of argument his 'Exorcism of Enthusiasm.' He showed that to abandon reason for fancy is to lay aside the solid supports of religion, to trust faith to the mere ebb and flow of 'melancholy,' and so to confirm the sceptic in his doubts and the atheist in his unbelief. He dwelt upon the unruly power of imagination, its deceptive character, its intimate connection with varying states of physical temperament—upon the variety of emotional causes which can produce quakings and tremblings and other convulsive forms of excitement—upon the delusiveness of visions, and revelations, and ecstasies, and their near resemblance to waking dreams—upon the sore temptations which are apt to lead into sin those who so closely link spirituality with bodily feelings, making religion sensual. He warned his readers against that sort of intoxication of the understanding, when the imagination is suffered to run wild in

[1] H. More, *Phil. Works*, General Preface, § 6; and *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus*, § 52.

allegorical interpretations of Scripture, in fanciful allusions, in theories of mystic influences and properties which carry away the mind into wild superstitions and Pagan pantheism. He spoke of the self-conceit of many fanatics, their turbulence, their heat and narrow scrupulosity, and asked how these things could be the fruits of heavenly illumination. He suggested as the proper remedies against enthusiasm, temperance (by which he meant temperate diet, moderate exercise, fresh air, a due and discreet use of devotion), humility, and the sound tests of reason—practical piety, and service to the Church of God. Such is the general scope of his treatise; but the most interesting and characteristic portion is towards the close and in the Scholia appended to it, in which he speaks of 'that true and warrantable enthusiasm of devout and holy souls,' that 'delicious sense of the Divine life'[1] which the spirit of man is capable of receiving. If space allowed, one or two fine passages might be quoted in which he describes these genuine emotions. He has also some good remarks upon the value, within guarded limits, of disturbed and excited religious feelings in rousing the soul from lethargy, and acting as external aids to dispose the mind for true spiritual influences.

Henry More died the year before King William's accession. But his opinions were, no doubt, shared by some of the best and most cultivated men in the English Church during the opening years of the eighteenth century. After a time his writings lost their earlier popularity. Wesley, to his credit, recommended them in 1756 to the use of his brother clergymen.[2] As a rule, they appear at that time to have been but little read; their spiritual tone is pitched in too high a key for the prevalent religious taste of the period which had then set in. Some years had to pass before the rise of a generation more prepared to draw refreshment from the imaginative and somewhat mystical beauties of his style and sentiment.[3]

When once the genius of Locke was in the ascendant, more spiritual forms of philosophy fell into disrepute. Descartes, Malebranche, Leibnitz were considered almost obsolete; More and Cudworth were out of favour: and there was but scanty

[1] § 62. [2] 'Address to the Clergy.'—Wesley's *Works*, 492.

[3] Coleridge seems to have read H. More with much enjoyment.—*Aids to Reflection*, i. 106-10. 'Occasional draughts,' Channing writes, of More and other Platonists, 'have been refreshing to me.' . . . Their mysticism was noble in its kind, 'and perhaps a necessary reaction against the general earthliness of men's minds. I pardon the man who loses himself in the clouds, if he will help me upwards.'—W. E. Channing's *Correspondence* 338.

tolerance for any writer who could possibly incur the charge of transcendentalism or mysticism. It is not that Cartesian or Platonic, or even mystic opinions, are irreconcileable with Locke's philosophy. When he spoke of sensation and reflection as the original sources of all knowledge, there was ample room for innate ideas, and for intuitive perceptions, under the shelter of terms so indefinite. Moreover, the ambiguities of expression and apparent inconsistencies of thought, which stand out in marked contrast to the force and lucidity of his style, are by no means owing only to his use of popular language, and his studied avoidance of all that might seem to savour of the schools. His devout spirit rebelled against the carefully defined limits which his logical intellect would have imposed upon it. He could not altogether avoid applying his system to the absorbing subjects of theology, but he did so with some unwillingness and with much reserve. Revelation, once acknowledged as such, was always sacred ground to him ; and though he often appears to reduce all evidence to the external witness of the senses, there is something essentially opposed to materialistic notions, in his feeling that there is that which we do not know simply by reason of our want of a new and different sense, by which, if we had it, we might know our souls as we know a triangle.[1] Locke would have heartily disowned the conclusions of many who professed themselves his true disciples, and of many others whose whole minds had been trained and formed under the influences of his teaching, and who insisted that they were but following up his arguments to their legitimate consequences.[2] The general system was the same ; but there was nothing in common between the theology of Locke and Toland's repudiation of whatever in religion transcended human reason, or Bolingbroke's doubts as to the immortality of the soul, or the pronounced materialism of Hartley and Condillac, or the blank negative results at which Hume arrived.

But though Locke and multitudes of his admirers were profoundly Christian in their belief, the whole drift of his thought tended to bring prominently forward the purely practical side of religion and the purely intellectual side of theology, and to throw into the background, and reduce to its narrowest compass, the more entirely spiritual region which marks the contact of the human with the Divine. Its uncertain lights and shadows, its mysteries, obscurities, and difficulties, were thoroughly distrusted by him. He did not—a religious mind like his could not—deny

[1] Quoted by Bishop Berkeley, *Theory of Vision*, pt. i. § 116.

[2] Schlosser, *History of the Eighteenth Century*, chap. 1. i. Horsley's *Charges*, 86. *Quarterly Review*, July 1864, 70–9.

the existence of those feelings and intuitions which, from their excessive prominence in that school, may be classed under the name of mystic. But he doubted their importance and dreaded their exaggerations. Not only could they find no convenient place, scarcely even a footing, in his philosophical system, but they were out of accord with his own temperament and with the opinions, which he was so greatly contributing to form, of the age in which he lived. They offended against his love of clearness, his strong dislike of all obscurity, his wish to see the chart of the human faculties mapped out and defined, his desire to translate abstract ideas into the language of sound, practical, ordinary sense, divested as far as could be of all that was open to dispute, and of all that could in any way be accounted visionary. His perpetual appeal lay to the common understanding, and he regarded, therefore, with much suspicion, emotions which none could at all times realise, and which to some minds were almost, or perhaps entirely unknown. Lastly, his fervent love of liberty indisposed him to admissions which might seem to countenance authority over the consciences of men on the part of any who should assert special claims to spiritual illumination.

Locke struck a keynote which was harped upon by a host of theologians and moralists after him, whenever, as was constantly the case, they had occasion to raise their voice against that dreaded enemy, enthusiasm. There were many who inveighed against 'the new modish system of reducing all to sense,' when used to controvert the doctrines of revelation. But while with vigour and success they defended the mysteries of faith against those who would allow nothing but what reason could fairly grasp, and while they dwelt upon the paramount authority of the Spirit which inspired Holy Scripture, they would allow no sort of spiritual influence to compete with reason as a judge of truth. Reason, it was perpetually argued, is sufficient for all our present needs. Revelation is adequately attested by evidence addressed to the reason. We need no other proof or ground of assent ; at all events, none other is granted to us. It was not so indeed in the first age of the Church. Special gifts of spiritual knowledge and illumination were then given to meet special requirements. The Holy Spirit was then in very truth immediately present in power, the greatest witness to the truth, and its direct revealer to the hearts of men. Many of the principal preachers and theological writers of the eighteenth century dwell at length upon the fulness of that spiritual outpouring. But it is not a little remarkable to notice with what singular care they often limit and circumscribe its duration. A little earlier or a little later, but, at all events, at the end of a generation or two

after the first Christian Pentecost, a line of demarcation was to be drawn and jealously guarded.

In the second book of Warburton's 'Doctrine of Grace' there is a singular instance of apparent incapacity on the part of a most able reasoner to acknowledge the possible existence in his own day of other spiritual influences than those which, in the most limited sense of the word, may be called ordinary. He is speaking of the splendour of the gifts which shed their glory upon the primitive Church and afterwards passed away. He dwells with admiration upon the sudden and entire changes which were made in the dispositions and manner of those whom the Holy Spirit had enlightened. Sacred antiquity, he says, is unmistakeable in its evidence on this point, and even the assailers of Christianity confessed it. Conversions were effected among early Christians such as could not be the result of mere rational conviction. It is utterly impossible for the magisterial faculty of reason to enforce her conclusions with such immediate power, and to win over the will with such irresistible force, as to root out at once inveterate habits of vice. 'To what must we ascribe so total a reform, but to the all-powerful operation of grace?'[1] These remarks are true enough; but it seems incredible that, writing in the very midst of an extraordinary religious outburst, he should calmly assume the impossibility in other than primitive times of such sudden changes from irreligion to piety, and should even place the miraculous conversions of apostolic times at the head of an argument against Methodist enthusiasts. Well might Wesley remark with some surprise, 'Never were reflections more just than these,'[2] and go on to show that the very same changes were constantly occurring still.

In truth, it may be said without any disparagement of a host of eminent English divines of the eighteenth century, that their entire sympathies were with the reasonable rather than with the spiritual side of religion. Their ideal of Christian perfection was in many respects an elevated one, but absolutely divested of that mystic element which in every age of the Church has seemed to be inseparable from the higher types of saintliness. If we may judge from the treatises of Lord Lyttelton and Dean Graves, the character even of the apostles had to be carefully vindicated from all suspicion of any taint of enthusiasm if they were to maintain their full place of reverence as leaders and princes of the Christian army. Only it must not be supposed that this religious characteristic of the age was by any means confined to the sceptical and indifferent on the one hand, or to

[1] Warburton's *Works*, iv. 568.

[2] 'Letter to the Bishop of Gloucester.'—Wesley's *Works*, ix. 151.

persons of a sober and reflective spirit on the other. It was almost universal. John Wesley, for example, repeatedly and anxiously rebuts the charges of enthusiasm which were levelled upon him from all sides. He would have it understood that he had for ever done with enthusiasm when once he had separated from the Moravians. The same shrinking from the name, as one of opprobrium, is shown by Dr. Watts ;[1] and one of the greatest troubles in Hannah More's life seems to have been her annoyance, that she and other faithful members of the English Church should be defamed as encouragers of enthusiasm.[2]

The eighteenth century was indeed an age when sober reason would hear of no competitor, and whose greatest outburst of religious zeal characteristically took its name from the well-ordered method with which it was organised. It will not, however, be inferred that enthusiasm, as the word was then commonly understood, scarcely existed. On the contrary, the vigour and constancy of the attack points with sufficient clearness to the evident presence of the enemy. In fact, although the more exaggerated forms of mysticism and fanaticism have never permanently thriven on English soil, there has never been an age when what may be called mystical religion has not had many ardent votaries. For even the most extravagant of its multiform phases embody an important element of truth, which cannot be neglected without the greatest detriment to sound religion. Whatever be its particular type, it represents the protest of the human soul against all that obscures the spirituality of belief. But of all the accidents and externals of religion, there is not one, however important in itself, which may not be made unduly prominent, and under such circumstances interfere between the soul and the object of its worship. It will be readily understood, therefore, upon how great a variety of grounds that protest may be based, how right and reasonable it may sometimes be, but also how easily it may itself run into excess, and how quickly the understanding may lose its bearings, when once, for fear of the abuse, it begins to dispense with what was not intended to check, but to guide and regulate the aspirations of the Spirit. Mystical and enthusiastical religion, whether in its sounder or in its exaggerated and unhealthy forms, may be a reaction against an over-assertion of the powers of reason in spiritual matters and questions of evidence, or against the undue extension, in subjects too high for it, of the domain of 'common sense ;' or it may be a vindication of the spiritual rights of the

[1] Dedication to his *Three Sermons*, quoted by H. S. Skeats, *History of the Free Churches*, 333.

[2] W. Roberts, *Memoirs of Hannah More*, i. 500, ii. 61, 70, 110.

uneducated against the pretensions of learning; or an assertion of the judgment and conscience of the individual against all tyranny of authority. It may be a protest against excessive reverence for the letter of Holy Scripture as against the Spirit which breathes in it, against all appearance of limiting inspiration to a book, and denying it to the souls of living men. It may express insurrection against all manner of formalism, usages which have lost their significance, rites which have ceased to edify, doctrines which have degenerated into formulas, orthodoxy which has become comparatively barren and profitless. It may represent a passionate longing to escape from party differences and sectarian strife into a higher, purer atmosphere, where the free Spirit of God bloweth where it listeth. It often owes its origin to strong revulsion against popular philosophies which limit all consciousness to mere perceptions of the senses, or against the materialistic tendencies which find an explanation for all mysteries in physical phenomena. It may result from endeavours to find larger scope for reverie and contemplation, or fuller development for the imaginative elements of religious thought. It may be a refuge for spirits disgusted at an unworthy and utilitarian system of ethics, and at a religion too much degraded into a code of moral precepts. All these tendencies, varying in every possible degree from the healthiest efforts after greater spirituality of life to the wildest excesses of fanatical extravagance, may be copiously illustrated from the history of enthusiasm. The writers of the eighteenth century were fully alive to its dangers. It was easy to show how mystical religion had often led its too eager, or too untaught followers into the most mischievous antinomianism of doctrine and life, into allegorising away the most fundamental grounds of Christianity, and into the vaguest Pantheism. They could produce examples in abundance of bewildered intellects, of 'illuminations' obscurer than any darkness, of religious rapture, in its ambitious distrust of reason, lapsing into physical agencies and coarse materialism. They could hold up, in ridicule or warning, profuse illustrations of exorbitant spiritual pride, blind credulity, infatuated self-deceit, barefaced imposture. It was much more congenial to the prevalent temper of the age to draw a moral from such perversions of a tone of feeling with which there was little sympathy, than to learn a useful lesson from the many truths contained in it. Doubtless, it is not easy to deal with principles which have been maintained in an almost identical form, but with consequences so widely divergent, by some of the noblest, and by some of the most foolish of mankind, by true saints and by gross fanatics. The contemporaries of Locke, Addison, and Tillotson, trained in a wholly different school of

thought, were ill-fitted to enter with patience into such a subject, to see its importance, to discriminate its differences, and to solve its perplexities.

At the opening of the eighteenth century, the elements of enthusiasm were too feeble to show themselves in any acknowledged form either in the Church of England or in the leading Nonconformist bodies. In England, no doubt, as in every other European country, there were, as Mr. Vaughan observes, 'Scattered little groups of friends, who nourished a hidden devotion by the study of pietist and mystical writings. . . . Whenever we can penetrate behind the public events which figure in history at the close of the seventeenth, and the opening of the eighteenth century, indications are discernible, which make it certain that a religious vitality of this description was far more widely diffused than is commonly supposed.'[1] But these recluse societies made no visible impression upon the general state of religion. If it were not for the evident anxiety felt by many writers of the period to expose and counteract the dangers of a mystical and enthusiastical bias, it might have been supposed that there never was a time when the Church was so entirely free from any possible peril in that direction. Their fear, however, was not without some foundation. When an important phase of spiritual truth is comparatively neglected by established authorities and in orthodox opinion, it is sure to find full vent in another less regular channel. We are told that in the first years of the century, the Quakers had immensely increased. 'They swarm,' said Leslie, 'over these three nations, and they stock our plantations abroad.'[2] Quakerism had met with little tolerance in the previous century. Churchmen and Dissenters had unanimously denounced it, and Baxter, large-minded as he often proved himself, denied its adherents all hope of salvation. But the sect throve under persecution ; and in proportion as its follies and extravagances became somewhat mitigated, the spirituality of belief, which even in its most exaggerated forms had always been its soul of strength, became more and more attractive to those who felt its deficiency elsewhere. Between the passing of the Toleration Act and the end of William III.'s reign it made great progress. After that it began gradually to decline. This was owing to various causes. Some share in it may perhaps be attributed to the continued effects of the general religious lethargy which had set in some years before, but may have now begun to spread more visibly among the classes from which Quakerism was chiefly recruited.

[1] R. A. Vaughan's *Hours with the Mystics*, ii. 391.
[2] C. Leslie, 'Snake in the Grass.'—*Works*, iv. 21.

Again, its intellectual weakness would naturally become more apparent in proportion to the daily increasing attention paid to the reasonable aspects of faith. The general satisfaction felt, except by the pronounced High Church and Jacobite party, at the newly established order in Church and State, was unfavourable to the further progress of a communion which, from its rejection of ideas common to every other ecclesiastical body, seemed to many to be rightly called 'the end and centre of all confusion.'[1] It may be added that, as the century advanced, there gradually came to be within the confines of the National Church a little more room than had lately existed for the upholders of various mystical tenets. With the rise of Wesleyanism enthusiasm found full scope in a new direction. But the power of Quakerism was not only silently undermined by the various action of influences such as these. In the first years of the century it received a direct and serious blow in the able exposure of its extravagances written by Leslie. The vagaries of the French 'Prophets' also contributed to discredit the assumption of supernatural gifts in which many Quakers still indulged.

It is needless to dwell with Leslie on the wild heretical opinions into which the over-strained spirituality of the disciples of Fox and Penn had led them. Certainly, the interval between them and other Christian communities had sometimes been so wide that there was some justification for the assertions made on either side, that the name of Christian could not be so widely extended as to be fitly applied to both. Archbishop Dawes, for example, in the House of Lords, roundly refused them all claim to the title; and there were thousands of Quakers who would retaliate the charge in terms of the most unsparing vigour. To these men, all the Gospel was summed up in the one verse that tells how Christ is the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Leslie was able to produce quotations in plenty from acknowledged authorities among them which allegorised away all belief in a personal Saviour, and which bade each man seek within himself alone for the illuminating presence of his Christ and God.

It was well that the special dangers to which Quakerism and other forms of mysticism are liable should be brought clearly and openly into view. But after all it is not from the extravagances and perversions of a dogma that the main lesson is to be learnt. With the Bible open before them, and with hearts alive to the teachings of holiness, the generality of religious-minded Quakers were not likely to be satisfied with what Warburton rightly

[1] Dr. Sherlock, *On Public Worship*, chap. iii. § 1, 4.

called not so much a religion as 'a divine philosophy, not fit for such a creature as man,'[1] nor with a religious vocabulary summed up, as a writer in the 'Tatler' humorously said, in the three words, 'Light,' 'Friend,' and 'Babylon.'[2] There was no reason why the worship of the individual should not be very free from the prevalent errors of the sect, and be in a high sense pure and Christian. For the truths which at one time made Quakerism so strong are wholly separable, not only from the superficial eccentricities of the system, but from its gravest deficiencies in form and doctrine. There is nothing to forbid a close union of the most intensely human and personal elements of Christian faith with that refined and pervading sense of a present life-giving Spirit which was faithfully borne witness to by Quakers when it was feeblest and most neglected elsewhere. If Quaker principles, instead of being embodied in a strongly antagonistic form as tenets of an exclusive and often persecuted sect,[3] had been transfused into the general current of the national religious life, they would at once have escaped the extravagances into which they were led, and have contributed the very elements of which the spiritual condition of the age stood most in need. Not only in the moderate and constantly instructive pages of Barclay's 'Apology' for the Quakers, but also in the hostile expositions of their views which we find in the works of Leslie and their other opponents, there is frequent cause for regret that so much suggestive thought should have become lost to the Church at large. The Quakers were accustomed to look at many important truths in somewhat different aspects from those in which they were commonly regarded; and the Church would have gained in power as well as in comprehension, if their views on some points had been fully accepted as legitimate modes of orthodox belief. English Christianity would have been better prepared for its formidable struggle with the Deists, if it had freely allowed a wider margin for diversity of sentiment in several questions on which Quaker opinion almost universally differed from that of the Churchmen of the age. It was said of Quakers that they were mere Deists, except that they hated reason.[4] The imputation might not unrequently be true; for a Quaker consistently with his principles

[1] Warburton's 'Alliance.'—*Works*, 1788, iv. 53.

[2] *Tatler*, No. 257.

[3] Canon Curteis remarks of the early Quakers, 'What was urgently wanted, and what Christ (I think) was really commissioning George Fox and others to do, was not a destructive, but a constructive work,—the work of breathing fresh life into old forms, recovering the true meaning of old symbols, raising from the dead old words that needed translating into modern equivalents.'—G. H. Curteis, *Dissent in Relation to the Church of England*, 268.

[4] C. Leslie, 'Defence, &c.'—*Works*, v. 164.

might reject some very essential features of Christianity. Often, on the other hand, such a charge would be entirely erroneous, for, no less consistently, a Quaker might be in the strictest sense of the word a thorough and earnest Christian. But in any case he was well armed against that numerous class of Deistical objections which rested upon an exclusively literal interpretation of Scripture. This is eminently observable in regard of theories of inspiration. To Quakers, as to mystical writers in general, biblical infallibility has never seemed to be a doctrine worth contending for. They have always felt that an admixture of human error is perfectly innocuous where there is a living spirit present to interpret the teaching of Scripture to the hearts of men. But elsewhere, the doctrine of unerring literal inspiration was almost everywhere held in its straitest form. Leslie, for example, quotes with horror a statement of Ellwood, one of his Quaker opponents, that St. Paul expected the day of judgment to come in his time. 'If,' answers Leslie, 'he thought it *might*, then it follows that he was mistaken, and consequently that what he wrote was not truth; and so not only the authority of this Epistle, but of all the Epistles, and of all the rest of the New Testament, will fall to the ground.'[1] Such specious, but false and dangerous reasoning is by no means uncommon still; but when it represented the general language of orthodox theologians, we cannot wonder that the difficulties started by Deistical writers caused widespread disbelief, and raised a panic as if the very foundations of Christianity were in danger of being overthrown.

There were other ways in which profound confidence in direct spiritual guidance shielded Quakers from perplexities which shook the faith of many. They had been among the first to turn with horror from those stern views of predestination and reprobation which, until the middle of the seventeenth century, had been accepted by the great majority of English Protestants without misgiving. It was doctrine utterly repugnant to men whose cardinal belief was in the light that lighteth every man. The same principle kept even the most bigoted among them from falling into the prevalent opinion which looked upon the heathen as altogether without hope and without God in the world. They, almost alone of all Christian missionaries of that age, pointed their hearers (not without scandal to their orthodox brethren) to a light of God within them which should guide them to the brighter radiance of a better revelation. Nor did they scruple to assert that 'there be members of this Catholic Church both among heathens, Jews, and Turks, men and women of integrity and simplicity of heart, who, though blinded in some things of

[1] C. Leslie, *Works*, iv. 428.

their understanding, and burdened with superstition, yet, being upright in their hearts before the Lord, ... and loving to follow righteousness, are by the secret touches of the holy light in their souls enlivened and quickened, thereby secretly united to God, and thereby become true members of this Catholic Church.'[1] Such expressions would be generally assented to in our day, as embodying sound and valuable truths, which cannot be rejected on account of errors which may sometimes chance to attend them. At the beginning of the eighteenth century there were few, except Quakers, who were willing to accept from a wholly Christian point of view the element of truth contained in the Deistical argument of 'Christianity as old as the Creation.'

Somewhat similar in kind was the protest of the Quakers against dogmatism as to the precise nature of the Atonement,[2] and against unspiritual and, so to say, physical interpretations put upon passages in Scripture which speak of the efficacy of the blood of Christ. On this ground also they, and the mystic school in general, were constantly inveighed against as mere Deists. Yet the rigid definitions insisted upon by many of the Reformers were much at variance with the wider views held in earlier and later times. It is at all events certain that, both within and without the English Church, those who held these views were protected from many of the most forcible objections with which the Christianity of the age was assailed.

The Quakerism, which at the end of the seventeenth and at the beginning of the eighteenth century was strong in numbers and in religious influence, has claimed our attention thus far in regard only of those modes of thought which it holds in common with most other forms of so-called mystic theology. On this ground it comes into close relation with the history of the English Church. M. Matter, in his 'History of Christianity,' speaks of Quakerism in conjunction with Methodism as the two forms of English reaction against formalism alike in doctrine and in government.[3] But it has been a merit of the English Church, and its most distinguishing title to the name of 'National,' that it has been able to learn from the sects which have grown up around it. Cautiously and tardily—often far too much so for its own immediate advantage—it has seldom neglected to find at last within its ample borders some room for modes and expres-

[1] R. Barclay's *Apology for thew Qakers*, 259.

[2] No doubt some forms of Quakerism (for in it, as in every form of mystic theology, there were many varieties) lost sight almost altogether of any idea of atonement. Cf. *British Quarterly*, October 1874, 337; C. Leslie, 'Satan Disrobed.'—*Works*, iv. 398–418; id. v. 100.

[3] M. J. Matter, *Histoire du Christianisme*, iv. 343.

sions of Christian belief which, for a time neglected, had been growing up outside its bounds. It was so with Methodism ; it was so also with Quakerism. When Quakers found that its more reasonable tenets could be held, and find a certain amount of sympathy within the Church, it quickly began to lose its strength. A remark of Boswell's in 1776, that many a man was a Quaker without his knowing it,[1] could scarcely have been made in the corresponding year of the previous century. At the earlier date there was almost nothing in common between the Church and a sect which, both on its strongest and weakest side, was marked by a conspicuous antagonism to established opinions. At the latter date Quakerism had to a great extent lost both its mystic and emotional monopolies. After a few years' hesitation Southey concluded that he need not join the Quakers simply because he disliked 'attempting to define what has been left indefinite.'[2] The semi-mystical turn of thought which is most keenly alive to the futility of such endeavours was no longer a tenable ground for secession. Or if a man believed in visible manifestations of spiritual influences, he would more probably become a Methodist than a Quaker ; and the time was not yet come when to be a Methodist was to cease to be a Churchman. In one respect, however, Quakerism possessed a safeguard to emotional excitement which in Methodism was wanting.[3] It was that notion of tranquil tarrying and spiritual quiet which was as alien to the spirit of later Methodism as it is congenial to that of mysticism. The language of the Methodist would entirely accord with that of the Quaker in speaking of the pangs of the new birth, and of the visible tokens of the Spirit's presence ; but the absence of reserve and the mutual 'experiences' of the Methodist stand out in a strong, and to many minds unfavourable, contrast with the silence and self-absorption of which Quakerism had learnt the value.

> Then comes the Spirit to our hut,
> When fast the senses' doors are shut ;
> For so Divine and pure a guest
> The emptiest rooms are furnished best.[4]

Or, in the words of one of the saintliest of the mediæval mystics,

[1] Boswell's *Life of Dr. Johnson*, ii. 456.

[2] Southey's 'Letters,' quoted in *Quarterly Review*, 98, 494.

[3] 'I fancy that most of the Churches need to learn and receive of one another ; and I have often wished that the zealous Methodist, for instance, who lives so much in action and in the atmosphere of religious excitement, could sometimes enter thoroughly into the spirit of the more religious Friends.'—H. H. Dobney, *Free Churches*, 106.

[4] J. Byrom's *Poems*.

'In the chamber of the heart God works. But what He works in the souls of those with whom He holds direct converse none can say, nor can any man give account of it to another; but he only who has felt it knows what it is; and even he can tell thee nothing of it, save only that God in very truth hath possessed the ground of his heart.'[1]

It may here be observed that what has been said of Quakerism, so far as it was at one time representative of that mystic element which the eighteenth century called enthusiasm, will be a sufficient reason for passing all the more briefly over other branches of the same subject. The idea of self-surrender to the immediate action of spiritual influence is a bond of union far more potent than any external or ecclesiastical differences. Whatever be the period, or Church, or state of society in which it is found, mysticism is always very nearly the same both in its strength and in its weakness. It exhibits, indeed, the most varied phases, according to the direction and degree in which it falls into those excesses to which it is peculiarly liable, but such extravagances are very independent of the particular community in which they happen to appear. Different as are the associations connected with such names as Plato and Pythagoras, Plotinus and Dionysius, St. Bernard and T. à Kempis, Eckhart and Tauler, More and Norris, Fénelon and Guyon, Arndt and Spener, Law and Byrom, Quakers and Moravians, Schleiermacher and Schelling, yet passages might be collected from each, often striking and sometimes sublime, which show very close and essential points of affinity. And just in proportion as each form of mysticism has relaxed its hold upon steadying grounds of reason, the diversified dangers to which it is subject uniformly recur. Every successive type of mystic enthusiasm, if once it has passed its legitimate bounds, has produced exactly analogous instances of pantheism, antinomianism, or fanaticism.

Early in the eighteenth century, when Quakerism was just beginning to lose its influence, its wild assumptions of an earlier date were paralleled by a new form of fanatical enthusiasm. In 1706 there arose, says Calamy, 'a mighty noise as concerning new prophets.'[2] These were certain Camisards,[3] as they were called, of the Cevennes, who, after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, had risen in the cause of their religion, and had been suppressed with great severity by Marshals Montrevel and Villars.

[1] Tauler's *Sermon for Epiphany*; Winkworth's *History and Life, with twenty-five Sermons translated*, 223.

[2] Calamy's *Own Life*, ii. 71.

[3] W. M. Hatch's edition of Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*, Appen. 376-8.

Suffering and persecution have always been favourable to highly-wrought forms of mysticism. In their sore distress men and women have implored for and obtained consolations which transcend all ordinary experience. They have cried, in agonies of faith and doubt, for cheering visions of brighter things.

> Father, O Father, what do we here,
> In this land of unbelief and fear?
> The land of dreams is brighter far,
> Above the light of the morning star.[1]

Not only have they been comforted by what they feel to be direct intuitions of a Divine Presence in them and about them, but their imaginations have been kindled into fervent anticipations of triumphs near at hand and of judgments soon to fall upon their oppressors. From excited feelings such as these it is but a very little step for illiterate and undisciplined minds to pass into the wildest phrensies of fanaticism. So it was with these 'French prophets.' The cause of foreign Protestantism was at this time very popular in England; and when a number of them found their way hither as refugees they met at first with much sympathy, and had many admirers. Some men even of learning and reputation, as Sir Edward Bulkeley and John Lacy, threw themselves heart and soul into the movement, on the not unreasonable ground that the dulness of religion and the degeneracy of the time needed a new dispensation of the Spirit, and that a great revival had begun. It is unnecessary to follow up the history in any detail. The impulse had been very genuine in the first instance, and had stood the test of much fierce trial. Transplanted to alien soil, it rapidly degenerated, and presently became degraded into mere imposture. For a time, however, it not only created much excitement throughout England, and even as far north as Aberdeen, but also attracted the anxious attention of several men of note. There could not be many subjects on which Hoadly and Shaftesbury, Spinckes the Nonjuror, Whiston and Calamy could all be writing contemporaneously on the same side. But it was so in this case.

The commotion caused by these Camisard refugees quickly passed away, but left its impression on the public mind, and made the educated classes more than ever indisposed to bear with any outbursts of religious feelings which should in any way outstep the bounds of sobriety and order. When strange physical manifestations began to break out under the preaching of Wesley and Whitefield, the quakings and tremblings, the sighings and convulsions, which middle-aged people had seen or heard of in their

[1] W. Blake, *Miscellaneous Poems*, 'The Land of Dreams.'

younger days were by many recalled to memory, and helped to strengthen the unfortunate prejudices which the new movement had created. Wesley himself was vexed and puzzled at the obvious resemblance. He was quite ready to grant that such agitations betokened 'natural distemper'[1] in the case of the French prophets, yet the remembrance of them embarrassed him, for he was convinced that what he saw around him were veritable pangs of the new birth, the undoubted effects of spiritual and supernatural agencies.

About the same time that the Protestant enthusiasts of the Cevennes were conspicuously attracting the admiration or derision of the English public, another form of mysticism imported from Catholic France was silently working its way among a few persons of cultivated thought and deep religious sentiment. Fénelon was held in high and deserved esteem in England. Even when vituperation was most unsparingly lavished upon Roman Catholics in general, his name, conjointly with those of Pascal and Bossuet, was honourably excepted. His mild and tolerant spirit, his struggles with the Jesuits, the purity of his devotion, the simple, practical way in which he had discussed the evidences of religion, and, lastly, but perhaps not least, the great popularity of his 'Telemachus,' combined to increase his reputation in this country. The Duke of Marlborough, at the siege of Bouchain, assigned a detachment of troops to protect his estates and conduct provisions to his dwelling.[2] Steele copied into one of the Saturday papers of the 'Guardian,'[3] with a preface expressive of his high admiration of the piety and talents of its author, the devotional passage with which Fénelon concluded his 'Demonstration.' Lyttelton made Plato welcome him to heaven as 'the most pure, the most gentle, the most refined, disciple of philosophy that the world in modern times has produced.'[4] Richard Savage spoke of him as the pride of France.[5] Jortin, in reference to him and other French Churchmen of his stamp, observed that no European country had produced Romanists of so high a type.[6] But Fénelon is thoroughly representative of a pure and refined mysticism. He is, indeed, singularly free from the various errors which closely beset its more exaggerated forms. Yet no admirer of his who had become at all penetrated with the spirit that breathes in his

[1] Wesley's *Third Journal*, p. 24, quoted by Lavington, *Enthus. of Meth. and Pa. Comp.*, 252.
[2] A. Alison's *Life of Marlborough*, chap. ix. § 30.
[3] *Guardian*, No. 69.
[4] Lord Lyttelton's *Dialogues of the Dead*, No. 3.
[5] R. Savage's *Miscellaneous Poems*, 'Character of Rev. J. Foster.'
[6] Jortin's *Letters*, ii. 43.

writings could fail to sympathise with the fundamental ideas common to every form of mystic theology. An age which abhorred enthusiasm might have found, nevertheless, in the author whom all extolled, opinions closely analogous to those by which the wildest fanatics had justified their extravagances. The doctrines of an inner light, of perfection, of reason quiescent amid the tumult of the soul, of mystical union, of disinterested love, are all strongly maintained by the Archbishop of Cambray. He wrote his 'Maximes des Saints' with the express purpose of showing how, in every age of the Church, opinions identical with those held by himself and Madame Guyon had been sanctioned by great authorities.[1] It was, in fact, a detailed defence of the Quietism and moderated mystical views which had excited the violent and unguarded attack of Bossuet.

Fénelon, with instinctive ease, escaped the pitfalls with which his subject was encompassed ; but it was not so with Madame Guyon, whose opinions he had so vigorously defended and all but identified with his own. There could scarcely be a better example of the insensible degrees in which, by the infirmity of human nature, sound spiritualism may decline into visionary fancies and a morbid state of religious emotion, than to notice how the writings of Guyon and Bourignon form transitory links between Fénelon and the extreme mystics. Their principles were the same, but the meditations of Madame Bourignon, although sometimes ranked in devotional value with those of A Kempis and De Sales, fell, if Leslie and others may be trusted,[2] into most of the dangerous and heretical notions into which an unreined enthusiasm is apt to lead. A defence of her opinions, published in London in 1699, and a collection, which followed soon after, of her translated letters, had considerable influence with many earnest spirits[3] who chafed at the coldness of the times, and cared little for other faults so long as they could find a religious literature in which they could, at all events, be safe from formalism and scholastic or sectarian disputings.

[1] R. H. Vaughan, *Hours with the Mystics*, ii. 226.

[2] C. Leslie's 'Snake in the Grass.'—*Works*, iv. 1–14. So also Lavington's *Enthusiasm*, &c., 346.

[3] 'In England her works have already deceived not a few.'—Leslie, Id. 14. 'What think you too of the Methodists? You are nearer to Oxford. We have strange accounts of their freaks. The books of Madame Bourignon, the French *visionnaire*, are, I hear, much enquired after by them.'—Warburton to Doddridge, May 27, 1738. Doddridge's *Correspondence*, &c., iii. 327.

Francis Lee, the Nonjuror, an excellent man, one of Robert Nelson's friends, was 'once a great Bourignonist.'—Hearne to Rawlinson, App. iii. 1718, quoted in H. B. Wilson's *History of Merchant Taylors' School*, ii. 957.

Lyttelton, in the same paper in which he pronounces his panegyric on Fénelon, calls Madame Guyon a 'mad woman' and 'a distracted enthusiast.' So much depends upon the greater or less sobriety with which views are stated; and excellent as Madame Guyon was, her effuse and somewhat morbid form of devotional sentiment can never be altogether congenial to English feeling, still less to English feeling such as it was in the first half of the eighteenth century. But her hymns, made familiar to readers in this country by Cowper's translations, were received by many with the same welcome as the works of Madame de Bourignon. If there were few who could appreciate the high-strung mystic aspirations after perfect self-renunciation, self-annihilation, and absorption in the abyss of the Divine infinity, the ecstatic joy in self-denial and suffering, whereby the soul might be so refined from selfishness as to surrender itself wholly to the will of God, and to see the marks of His love equally present everywhere—if to religious men and women outside the cloister this seemed like vainly striving

> To wind ourselves too high
> For sinful man beneath the sky,

yet in the general spirit of her verses they could gain refreshment not always to be found elsewhere. They could sympathise with the intense longing for a closer walk with God, with the hunger and thirst after a purer righteousness, a more unselfish love, a closer mystical union with the Divine life.

Yet, after all, it is not France, but Germany that has been for many centuries the chosen abode of every variety of mystic sentiment. The most exalted forms of spiritual Christianity have prospered there, and, on the other hand, the vaguest reveries and the grossest epidemics of fanaticism. We turn from the influence in the England of the eighteenth century of French revivalists and French Pietists to that exercised by one of the most remarkable of German mystics, Jacob Behmen. If it was an influence no longer popular and widely spreading, as it once had been, yet it directly and profoundly impressed one of the most eminent of our theologians, and indirectly its effects were by no means inconsiderable.

Behmen's writings (1612-24) travelled rapidly through Europe, found readers in every class, and are said to have been widely instrumental in recalling unbelievers to a Christian faith. They popularised and gave an immense extension to mysticism of every kind, good and bad. In Germany they largely contributed[1] to

[1] M. J. Matter, *Histoire du Christianisme*, iv. 344.

form the opinions of Arndt and Andreas, Spener and Francke, men to whom their country was indebted for a remarkable revival of spiritual religion. Their further influence may, perhaps, be traced through Francke on Count Zinzendorf and the Moravians,[1] and through Wolff on the mystic rationalism of later Germany. The German Romanticists of the end of the last and the beginning of this century were extravagant in his praises,[2] Schlegel declaring that he was superior to Luther. Novalis was scarcely less ardent in his admiration. Kahlman protested that he had learnt more from him than he could have learnt from all the wise men of his age together.[3] In England, both in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, he had many devoted followers and many violent opponents. Henry More speaks of him as a good and holy man, but at the same time 'an egregious enthusiast,' and regrets that he 'has given occasion to the enthusiasts of this nation in our late troublesome times to run into many ridiculous errors and absurdities.'[4] J. Wesley admitted that he was a good man, but says 'the whole of Behmenism, both phrase and sense, is useless.'[5] With an absence of appreciation almost amounting to a want of candour, not uncommon in this eminent man towards those from whom he disagreed, he will not even allow that he had any 'patrons'[6] who have adorned the doctrine of Christ. 'His language is barbarous, unscriptural, and unintelligible.' 'It is most sublime nonsense, inimitable bombast, fustian not to be paralleled.' Bishop Warburton also refers to him in the most unqualified[7] terms of contempt. William Blake, most mystical of poets and painters, delighted, as might well be expected, in Behmen's writings.[8] A far weightier testimony to their value is to be found in the high estimate which William Law—a theologian of saintly life, and most thoughtful and suggestive in his reasonings—formed of the spiritual treasury which he found there. He can scarcely find words to express his thankfulness for 'the depth and fulness of Divine light and truth opened in them by the grace and mercy of God.'[9]

[1] Francis Okely, one of the most distinguished of the English Moravians of the last century, was a great student and admirer of Behmen.—Nichol's *Literary Anecdotes*, iii. 93.

[2] Schelling and others, says Dorner, 'sought out and utilised many a noble germ in the fermenting chaos of Böhme's notions.'—J. A. Dorner's *History of Protestant Theology*, 1871, ii. 184.

[3] R. A. Vaughan, *Hours with the Mystics*, ii. 349.

[4] H. More's *Works*, 'Antidote against Atheism,' note to chap. xliv.

[5] J. Wesley, 'Thoughts upon Jacob Behmen.'—*Works*, ix. 509.

[6] Id. 513.

[7] Unqualified, even for Warburton. 'Doctrine of Grace,' b. iii. ch. ii. *Works*, iv. 706.

[8] A. Gilchrist's *Life of Blake*, i. 16.

[9] W. Law's introduction to his translation of Behmen's *Works*.

This extreme contrast of opinions may be easily accounted for. To most modern readers Jacob Behmen's works must be an intolerable trial of patience. They will find page after page of what they may very pardonably call, as Wesley did, 'sublime nonsense' or unintelligible jargon. Repetitions, obscurities, and verbal barbarisms abound in them, and the most ungrounded fancies are poured profusely forth as the most indubitable verities. But it is like diving for pearls in a deep and turbid sea. The pearls are there, if patiently sought for, and sometimes of rare beauty. To Behmen's mind the whole universe of man and nature is transfigured by the pervading presence of a spiritual life. Everywhere there is a contest against evil, sin, and death; everywhere there is a longing after better things, a yearning for the recovery of the heavenly type. Everywhere there is a groaning and travailing in pain until now, awaiting the adoption—to wit, the redemption of the body. None felt more keenly than Behmen that heaven is truly at our doors, and God not far away from every one of us. The Holy Spirit is to him in very deed Lord and Giver of all life, and teaches all things, and leads into all truth. He is well assured that to him who thirsts after righteousness, and hath his conversation in heaven, and knoweth God within him, and whose heart is prepared by purity and truth, such light of the eternal life will be granted that, though he be simple and unlearned, heavenly wisdom will be granted to him, and all things will become full of meaning. He puts no limit to the grand possibilities and capabilities of human nature. To him the soul of man is indeed 'larger than the sky, deeper than ocean,'[1] but only through union and conformity with that Divine Spirit which 'searcheth all things—yea, the deep things of God.' He would have welcomed as a wholly congenial idea that grand mediæval notion of an encyclopædic wisdom in which all forms of philosophy, art, and science build up, as it were, one noble edifice, rising heavenwards, domed in by Divine philosophy, the spiritual and intellectual knowledge of God; he would have agreed with Bonaventura that all human science 'emanates, as from its source, from the Divine Light.'[2] He felt also that in the unity of 'the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will,' would be found something deeper than all diversities in religion, which would reconcile them, and would solve Scripture difficulties and the mysteries which have tormented men.

These and suchlike thoughts, intensely realised, and sometimes expressed with singular vividness and power, possessed

[1] H. Coleridge, *Sonnet on Shakspeare.*
[2] Quoted in *Christian Schools and Scholars*, ii. 85.

great attraction to minds wearied with the religious controversies or spiritual dulness of the time, and which were not repelled by the wilderness of verbiage, the hazy cloudland, in which Behmen's conceptions were involved. William Law, the Nonjuror, was thoroughly fascinated by them, and their influence upon him forms an episode of considerable interest in the religious history of the period.

Yet if it had been only as the translator and exponent of 'the Teutonic theosophy' that William Law had become prominent, and incurred on every side the hackneyed charge of 'enthusiasm,' this excellent man might have claimed but a passing notice. His theological position in the eighteenth century is rendered chiefly remarkable by the power he showed (in his time singularly exceptional) of harmonising the ideas of mediæval mysticism with some of the most characteristic features of modern religious thought. A man of deep and somewhat ascetic piety, and gifted with much originality and with a cultured and progressive mind, he had many readers and a few earnest and admiring adherents, yet was never greatly in sympathy with the age in which he lived. Three or four generations earlier, or three or four generations later, he would have found much more that was congenial to one or another side of his intellectual temperament. At the accession of George I. in 1716 he declined to take the oaths, and resigned his fellowship at Cambridge, although, like others among the moderate Nonjurors, he remained to the last constant to the communion of the National Church.[1] In 1726 he wrote the 'Serious Call,' one of the most remarkable devotional books that have ever been published. Dr. Johnson, upon whom it made a profound and lasting impression, describes it as 'the finest piece of hortatory theology in any language.'[2] Gibbon, in whose father's house Law lived for some time as tutor and chaplain, says of it that 'if it found a spark of piety in the reader's mind it would soon kindle it to a flame.'[3] Southey remarks of it that 'few books have made so many religious enthusiasts.' The reading of it formed one of the first epochs in Wesley's religious life. It did much towards forming the character of the elder Venn. It was mainly instrumental in effecting the conversion from profligacy to piety of the once famous Psalmanazar.[4] Effects scarcely less striking are recorded in 1771 to have resulted upon its copious distribution among the inhabi-

[1] For fuller details, see *The Life and Opinions of W. Law*, by J. H. Overton, published since the first edition of this work.

[2] Boswell's *Johnson*, ii. 125.

[3] E. Gibbon, *Memoirs of My Life*, 13.

[4] *Quarterly Review*, 103, 310.

tants of a whole parish.[1] And lastly it may be added that Bishop Horne made himself thoroughly familiar with a kindred work by the same author—on 'Christian Perfection'—and was wont to express the greatest admiration of it.

From his retirement at Kingscliffe,[2] where he lived a life of untiring benevolence, Law took an active part in the religious controversies of the time; refusing, however, all payment for his publications. He entered the lists against Tindal, Chubb, and Mandeville, against Hoadly, against Warburton, against Wesley. His answer to Mandeville is called by J. Sterling 'a most remarkable philosophical essay,' full 'of pithy right reason,'[3] and has been republished by Frederick Maurice, with a highly commendatory introduction. The authority last mentioned also speaks of him as 'a singularly able controversialist in his argument with Hoadly;' and adds: 'Of all the writers whom he must have irritated—Freethinkers, Methodists, actors, Hanoverians,—of all the nonjuring friends whom he alienated by his quietism, none doubted his singleness of purpose.' It may be added that there were few of his opponents who might not have learnt from him a lesson of Christian courtesy. Living in an age when controversy of every kind was, almost as a rule, deformed by virulent personalities, he yet, in the face of much provocation, kept always faithful to his resolve that, 'by the grace of God, he would never have any personal contention with anyone.'[4]

Such was the man who, from about 1730 to his death in 1761, was a most earnest student of mystical theology. 'Of these mystical divines,' he says, 'I thank God I have been a diligent reader, through all ages of the Church, from the Apostolical Dionysius the Areopagite down to the great Fénelon, the illuminated Guyon, and M. Bertot.'[5] Tauler made a great impression on his mind, but Jacob Behmen most of all. Of these writers in general he speaks in grateful terms, as true spiritual teachers, purified by trials and self-discipline, and deeply learned in the mysteries of God, 'truly sons of thunder and sons of consolation, who awaken the heart, and leave it not till the kingdom of heaven is raised up in it.'

[1] Ewing's *Present-Day Papers*, 14.

[2] In Leslie Stephen's *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* we have a vivid picture of the retreat at Kingscliffe—the devotional exercises, the unstinted almsgiving, and Law's little study, four feet square, furnished with its chair, its writing-table, the Bible, and the works of Jacob Behmen. 'Certainly a curious picture in the middle of that prosaic eighteenth century, which is generally interpreted to us by Fielding, Smollett, and Hogarth.'—Chap. xii. 6 (70).

[3] F. D. Maurice, Introduction to Law's *Answer to Mandeville*, v.

[4] *Works*, vi. 216. [5] *Answer to Dr. Trapp.*—*Works*, vi. 319.

William Law was a man of far too great intellectual ability to be a mere borrower of ideas. What he read he thoroughly assimilated; and Behmen's strange theosophy, after passing through the mind of his English exponent, reappeared in a far more logical and comprehensible form. It cannot be said that Law was altogether a gainer by his later studies. To many of his contemporaries the result appeared quite the contrary; and he was constantly reproached with having become a mere mystic or a hopeless enthusiast. No doubt, he borrowed from his favourite authors some of their faults as well as many of their virtues. Jacob Behmen's most glaring faults in style and phraseology are sometimes transferred with little mitigation to his pages. A person who gathered his ideas of William Law from Wesley's critique would probably turn with impatience, and something like aversion, from one who could use upon the gravest subjects what might seem a strange jargon compounded out of Gnostic cosmogonies and alchemistic fancies. We take Jacob Behmen for what he was—a man in some respects of extraordinary spiritual insight, but perfectly illiterate; living at a time when the fame of Agrippa and Paracelsus was still recent, and accustomed to refer all his conceptions to immediate revelation from heaven. But we do not expect to find in a cultivated scholar of the eighteenth century such outlandish sayings as 'Nature is in itself a hungry, wrathful fire of life,' or pages of argument grounded upon the condition and fall of angels before the creation of the world. Such phraseology and such reasonings, even if culled from Law's writings less unrelentingly and more fairly than by Wesley and Warburton, are quite sufficient to create a reasonable prejudice against his opinions. Yet these are blemishes which lie comparatively on the surface. They are always found in reference to certain views which he had adopted about creation and the fall of man. Although, therefore, they occur constantly—for the Fall is always a very essential feature in the whole of Law's theology—they do not interfere with the general lucidity of his argument, or the devotional beauty of his thought.

Independently of occasional obscurities of language and visionary notions, Law does not altogether escape those more serious objections to which mystic writers are almost always liable. When he speaks of heavenly illumination, and of the birth of Christ within the soul, or of the all of God and the nothingness of man, or when he refers over slightingly to 'human reason' or 'human learning,' or to the outward machinery of religion in contrast to the direct communion of the soul with its Creator, it is impossible not to feel that he sometimes approaches over nearly to the dangerous verge where sound spiritualism loses self-control.

The ascetic austerity of Law's life and teaching was at once a recommendation and an impediment to the influence of his writings. From the beginning to the end of his active life he would never swerve an atom from the high and uncompromising type of holiness which he constantly set before himself as the bounden goal of all human effort. His mysticism only intensified this feeling. Assured as of a certain truth that, corrupt, fallen, and earthly as human nature is, there is nevertheless in the soul of every man 'the fire and light and love of God, though lodged in a state of hiddenness, inactivity, and death, ... overpowered by the workings of flesh and blood,'[1] it seemed to him the one worthy object of life, by purification and by mortification of the lower nature, to remove all hindrances to the enlightening efficacy of the Holy Spirit. So only could the Divine Image, the life of the triune God within the soul, be restored, and the heaven-born Spirit, 'that angel that died in Paradise,'[2] be born again to life within us. His words sound like a Christian paraphrase of what Plato had said in the 'Republic,' where he compares the present appearance of the soul to an image of the sea-god Glaucus, so battered by waves, so disfigured by the overgrowth of shells, and seaweed, and all kinds of earthy substances, that it has almost lost the similitude of the immortal likeness.[3] No one could have felt more keenly than William Law the overpowering need of this restorative process, and the fervent longing of the awakened soul to be delivered from that bondage of corruption which presses like a burden too heavy to be borne, not upon man only, but upon all creation, groaning and travailing in sympathetic pain, to be delivered from the evil and misery and death with which it is laden.[4] He will allow of no ideal short of the highest pattern of angelic[5] goodness, nor concede that we are called upon to pray, 'God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven,' without its full accomplishment being in human power. This height of aspiration gives great stimulative power to Law's writing, but, as is unfortunately apt to be the case, it is a source of weakness as well as of power. With him, as with many mystic writers, all other elements of human nature are slighted and neglected in the absorbing thirst for holiness. His ideal is indeed lofty, but it fails in expansiveness. When he speaks of absorption into the Divine will—of seeking 'deliverance from the misery and cap-

[1] *Way to Divine Knowledge*, 2nd ed. 1762, p. 7.—*Works*, vol. vii.
[2] Id. [3] Plato, *Republic*, b. x. § 611.
[4] *Appeal to all that Doubt*, 3rd ed. 1768, p. 131.—*Works*, vol. vi. *Spirit of Prayer*, 1st part, 73, vol. vii.
[5] Id. 24.

tivity of self by a total continual self-denial'[1]—of converting 'this poison of an earthly life into a state of purification'[2]—of 'turning from all that is earthly, animal, and temporal, and dying to the will of flesh and blood, because it is darkness, corruption, and separation from God;'[3] when—sound and thoughtful reasoner as he often is—he speaks with thorough distrust of 'the guidance of our own Babylonian reason,' and of learning as good indeed within its own sphere, but 'as different from Divine light as heaven from earth,'[4] and wholly useless to one who would 'be well qualified to write notes upon the spirit and meaning of the words of Christ;'[5] it is impossible not to feel that he is approaching very closely to the morbid pietism of the recluse. His was indeed no mere contemplative asceticism, but fruitful in practical virtues; and even its weaker points stand out in noble contrast with the deficiencies of an age which admired prudential religion, and took in good earnest the words of the Preacher as to being righteous overmuch.[6] But his writings would probably have had greater and wider influence if his piety had been less austere, and his ideal of life more comprehensive.

Yet, on the whole, William Law's mysticism had a most elevating effect on his theology, and has done much toward raising him to the very foremost rank of eighteenth-century divines. It broadened and deepened his views, so that from being only a luminary of the estimable but somewhat narrow section of the Nonjurors, he became a writer to whom some of the most distinguished leaders of modern religious thought have thankfully acknowledged their obligations. He learnt to combine with earnest piety and strong convictions an unreserved sympathy, as far as possible removed from the sectarianism of religious parties, with all that is good and Christlike wherever it might be found, wherever the Light that lighteth every man shines from its inward temple. He would like no truth, he said, the less because Ignatius Loyola or John Bunyan or George Fox were very zealous for it;[7] and while he chose to live and die in outward commu-

[1] *Answer to Dr. Trapp*, 38–39, vol. vi. [2] Id.
[3] *Way to Divine Knowledge*, 14.
[4] *Answer to Dr. Trapp*, 244.
[5] *Way to Divine Knowledge*, 98.
[6] The special reference to Dr. Joseph Trapp's 'Four Sermons on the Folly, Sin, and Danger of being Righteous overmuch; with a particular view to the Doctrines and Practices of Modern Enthusiasts,' 1739. The work had an extensive sale. S. Johnson's *Works* (R. Lynam), v. 497. It should be added that, from their own point of view, the sermons contain much sound sense and are by no means deficient in religious feeling.
[7] *Appeal*, &c., 278.

nion with the Church of England,[1] he desired to 'unite and join in heart and spirit with all that is Christian, holy, good, and acceptable to God in all other Churches.'[2] He deplored the 'partial selfish orthodoxy which cannot bear to hear or own that the spirit and blessing of God are so visible in a Church from which it is divided.'[3] He grieved that 'even the most worthy and pious among the clergy of the Established Church are afraid to assert the sufficiency of the Divine Light, because the Quakers who have broken off from the Church have made this doctrine their corner-stone.'[4] Of Romanism he remarked that 'the more we believe or know of the corruptions and hindrances of true piety in the Church of Rome, the more we should rejoice to hear that in every age so many eminent spirits, great saints, have appeared in it, whom we should thankfully behold as so many great lights hung out by God to show the true way to heaven.'[5]

Nor would he by any means limit the operations of true redeeming grace to the bounds of Christendom. Ever impressed with the sense that 'there is in all men, wherever dispersed over the earth, a divine, immortal, never-ending Spirit,'[6] and that by this Spirit of God in man all are equally His children, and that as Adam is spoken of as first father of all, so the second Adam is the regenerator of all,[7] he insisted that 'the glorious extent of the Catholick Church of Christ takes in all the world. It is God's unlimited, universal mercy to all mankind.'[8] Understood rightly, Christianity might truly be spoken of as being old as the Creation; for the Son of God was the eternal life and light of men, quite independently of the infinitely blessed revelation of Himself afforded in the Gospel. There is a Gospel Christianity, which is as the possession compared with the expectation. There is an 'original, universal Christianity, which began with Adam, was the religion of the Patriarchs, of Moses and the Prophets, and of every penitent man in every part of the world that had faith and hope towards God, to be delivered from the evil of this world.'[9] The real infidel, whether he be a professed disciple of the Gospel, of Zoroaster, or of Plato, is he who lives for the world and not for God.[10]

There was probably no one man in the eighteenth century, unless we except Samuel Coleridge, so competent as William Law to appreciate, from a thoroughly religious point of view, spiritual excellence in Christian and heathen, in Anglican, and Roman

[1] *Appeal*, &c., 279. [2] Id. 280. [3] Id. 282. [4] Id. 275. [5] Id. 282.
[6] Id. 4. [7] Id. 70; *Spirit of Prayer*, pt. i. 56–8.
[8] *Spirit of Prayer*, pt. i. 57.
[9] *Way to Divine Knowledge*, 78, and 31. *Appeal*, &c., 5.
[10] *Way to Divine Knowledge*, 14.

Catholic, and Methodist, and Quaker. Much in the same way, although a firm believer in revealed religion and a vigorous opponent of the Deists, engaged 'for twenty years in this dust of debate,'[1] he did not yield even to Bishop Butler in his power of recognising what was most forcible in their objections. The mystical tendencies of his religion, whatever may have been the special dangers incidental to them, at all events enabled him to meet the Deists with advantage on their own chosen ground. How he met Tindal's 'Christianity as Old as Creation' has been already mentioned. As Eusebius and St. Augustine and many others had done before him, he accepted it as to a great extent true, while he declined to accept Tindal's inferences from it.[2] So of the Atonement which was always considered the cardinal point in the controversy with Deists. Law willingly acknowledged the justice of many of their arguments, but maintained that the opinions they impugned were simply a mistaken view of true Christianity. The author of 'Deism fairly stated,' &c.—a work which excited much attention at its publication in 1746—had said, 'That a perfectly innocent Being, of the highest order among intelligent natures, should personate the offender and suffer in his place and stead, in order to take down the wrath and resentment of the Deity against the criminal, and dispose God to show mercy to him—the Deist conceives to be both unnatural and improper, and therefore not to be ascribed to God without blasphemy.' 'What an arrow,' answers Law, 'is here: I will not say shot beside the mark, but shot at nothing! . . . The innocent Christ did not suffer to quiet an angry Deity, but as co-operating, assisting, and uniting with that love of God which desired our salvation. He did not suffer in our place or stead, but only on our account, which is a quite different matter.'[3] 'Our guilt is transferred upon Him in no other sense than as He took upon Him the state and condition of our fallen nature . . . to heal, remove, and overcome all the evils that were brought into our nature by the fall . . . His merit or righteousness is imputed or derived into us in no other sense than as we receive from Him a birth, a nature, a power to become the sons of God.'[4]

[1] *Way to Divine Knowledge*, 15.

[2] One of the passages on the title-page of Tindal's *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, was the following sentence from the *Retractations* of St. Augustine: 'The thing which is now called the Christian Religion was also among the ancients, nor was it wanting from the beginning of the human race, until Christ came in the flesh, when the true religion that then was began to be called Christian.'—Quoted in Hunt's *Religious Thought in England*, ii. 434.

[3] *Spirit of Love*, pt. ii. 124, vol. viii.

[4] *Appeal*, &c., 199–200. *Spirit of Prayer*, pt. ii. 159.

There is nothing here said which would not now be widely assented to among members of most sections of the Christian Church. William Law's writings will not be rightly estimated unless it be remembered that in his time orthodox theology in England scarcely allowed of any other than those scholastic and forensic notions of the Atonement which he deprecates. Other views were commonly thought to savour of rank Deism or rank Quakerism. His theological opponents seemed somewhat to doubt under which of these denominations he should be placed, or whether he would not more properly be referred to both.[1]

Law's unwavering trust in a Spirit which guides faith and goodness into all necessary truth, led him to take a different course from the evidence writers of his time. 'I would not,' he says, 'take the method generally practised by the defenders of Christianity. I would not attempt to show from reason and antiquity the necessity and reasonableness of a Divine revelation in general, or of the Mosaic and Christian in particular. Nor do I enlarge upon the arguments for the credibility of the Gospel history, the reasonableness of its creeds, institutions, and usages; or the duty of man to receive things above, but not contrary to his reason. I would avoid all this, because it is wandering from the true point in question, and only helping the Deist to oppose the Gospel with a show of argument, which he must necessarily want, was the Gospel left to stand upon its own bottom.'[2] To follow up the line of thought suggested by these words would be in itself a treatise. It is a first axiom among all mystics, that light is its own witness. With what limitations and precautions this is to be transferred to the spiritual region, and how far Christianity is independent of other testimony than its own intrinsic excellence—is a question of profound importance, and one which various minds will answer very differently. Law's unhesitating answer is another example of the way in which he was wont to combat Deists with their own weapons.

The vigour and success with which Law controverted the reasonings of those who grounded human society upon expedience, was also owing in large part to what was styled his mysticism or his enthusiasm. A religious philosophy which led him to dwell with special emphasis on the Divine element inherent in man's nature, and his faculties in communion with the Infinite, inspired him with the strongest force of conviction in combating theories such as that expressed in its barest form by Mandeville—that, in man's original state, right and wrong were but other expressions

[1] Wesley's 'Letter to W. Law.'—*Works*, ix. 488—. Also Warburton on Middleton; and 'Doctrine of Grace,' part iii.—*Works*, vol. iv.

[2] *Way to Divine Knowledge*, 10. *Appeal*, &c., 325.

for what was found to be expedient or otherwise, that not rarely

> Vice is beneficial found,
> When it's by justice lopt and bound ;[1]

and that 'moral virtues' (unless regarded as dictates of a special revelation) 'are but the political offspring which flattery begot on pride.'[2] The answers even of Berkeley and Hutchinson had been comparatively feeble. They could not altogether escape from being hampered by those favourite reasonings of the day about the wisdom of morality and the advantages of religion, which after all were much like the very same argument from expedience, clothed in fairer garb. Law wrote in a different strain. Addressing himself to Deists who, whatever else might be their doubts, rarely departed from belief in a God, he bade them find their answer in that belief. 'Once turn your eyes to heaven, and dare but own a just and good God, and then you have owned the true origin of religion and moral virtue.' 'Suppose that God is of infinite justice, goodness, and truth . . . this is the strong and unmoveable foundation of moral virtue, having the same certainty as the attributes of God.'[3] Thence came that original excellence of man's nature which is essentially his healthy state, his sound and perfect condition, and of which all evil is the corruption and disease. Examine goodness, analyse it with unsparing strictness; and see 'whether the investigation does not prove that evil is *not* the substantial part of any act which is acted, or thought which is thought, in this world; but, on the contrary, the destructive element of it, that which makes it unreal and false.'[4]

Closely connected with this unfaltering conviction of the immutable character of right and wrong, that the light of our souls comes direct from the source of light, and that the principles of justice, truth, and mercy cannot be otherwise than identical in God and His reasoning creatures—came William Law's speculations about the ultimate destinies of man. It has been truly observed that 'the first step commonly taken by Protestant mysticism is an endeavour to mitigate the gloom which hangs over the future state.'[5] This is very strongly marked in all the later productions of Law's mind. He was very far from taking anything like an optimist view of the world around him. There is no writer of his age who shows himself more impressed with an abhorrence of sin, and with the sense of its widespread and deeply

[1] Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*, 1714, l. 425.
[2] Mandeville's *Enquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue*, p. 12.
[3] W. Law's *Answer to Mandeville*, 27.
[4] F. D. Maurice's Preface to Id.
[5] R. A. Vaughan, *Hours with the Mystics*, ii. 246.

rooted influences. He is austere even to excess in his views of what godliness requires. His whole soul is oppressed with the wilful ruin of spiritual life which he everywhere beholds. Yet he can conceive of no hope except by the recovery of that spiritual life, no atonement except by the extinguishing of sin,[1] no salvation nor redemption except by regeneration of nature,[2] no forgiveness of sin but by being made free from sin.[3] But paramount above all such thoughts is his ever-ruling conviction of the perfect love of God. 'Ask what God is? His name is Love; He is the good, the perfection, the peace, the joy, the glory and blessing of every life. Ask what Christ is? He is the universal remedy of all evil broken forth in nature and creature. He is the destruction of misery, sin, darkness, death, and hell. He is the resurrection and life of all fallen nature. He is the unwearied compassion, the long-suffering pity, the never-ceasing mercifulness of God to every want and infirmity of human nature. He is the breathing forth of the heart, life, and Spirit of God into all the dead race of Adam. He is the seeker, the finder, the restorer of all that was lost and dead to the life of God.'[4] Law utterly rejected the possibility of Divine love contradicting the highest conceptions which man can form of it; and he turned with horror from the arbitrary sovereignty suggested in the Calvinistic scheme. Nations or individuals, he said, might be chosen instruments for special designs, but 'elect' ordinarily meant 'beloved.' In any other sense the evil nature only in every man is reprobated, and that which is divine in him elected.[5] 'The goodness and love of God,' he asserted, 'have no limits or bounds, but such as His omnipotence hath.'[6] It was indeed conceivable that there may be spirits of men or fallen angels that have so totally lost every spark of the heavenly nature, and have become so essentially evil, that restoration is no more consistent with their innermost nature than for a circle to have the properties of a straight line. If not, 'their restoration is possible, and they will infallibly have all their evil removed out of them by the goodness of God.'[7] Christianity, he said, is the one true religion of nature, because man's corrupt state 'absolutely requires two things as its only salvation. First, the Divine life must be revived in the soul of man. Secondly, there must be a resurrection of the body in a better state after death.'[8] That religion only can be suffi-

[1] *Spirit of Love*, pt. ii. 87.
[2] *Spirit of Prayer*, pt. i. 53. Also, Id. 39, *Way to Divine Knowledge*, 96.
[3] W. Law's *Letters*, in R. Tighe's *Life of Law*, 72.
[4] *Spirit of Prayer*, pt. ii. 127
[5] *Spirit of Love*, pt. ii. 161.
[6] *Appeal to all that Doubt*, 88.
[7] *Way to Divine Knowledge*, 65.
[8] *Spirit of Love*, pt. ii. 140.

cient to the want of his nature which can provide this salvation. God's redeeming love, said Law, will not suffer the sinner to have rest or peace until, in time or in eternity, righteousness is restored and purification completed.[1] He expressed in the strongest language his belief that 'every act of what is called Divine vengeance, recorded in Scripture, may and ought, with the greatest strictness of truth, to be called an act of the Divine love. If Sodom flames and smokes with stinking brimstone, it is the love of God that kindled it, only to extinguish a more horrible fire. It was one and the same infinite love, when it preserved Noah in the ark, when it turned Sodom into a burning lake, and overwhelmed Pharaoh in the Red Sea.'[2] If God did not chastise sin, that lenience would argue that He was not all love and goodness towards man. And so far from its being a lessening of the just 'terrors of the Lord,' to say that His punishments, however severe, are inflicted not in vengeance but in love, such wholesome terrors are placed on more certain ground. Every work of piety is turned into a work of love; but from the licentious all false and idle hopes are taken away, and they must know that there is 'nothing to trust to as a deliverance from misery but the one total abolition of sin.'[3]

A few words may be added upon what was said of enthusiasm by one who was generally looked upon as the special enthusiast of his age. How much the usual meaning of the word has altered since the middle of the last century, is well illustrated by the length at which he argues that 'enthusiasm' ought not to be applied only to religion, and that it should be used in a good as well as in a bad sense.[4] It is 'a miserable mistake,' he says, 'to treat the real power and operation of an inward life of God in the birth of our souls, as fanaticism and enthusiasm.'[5] 'It is the running away from this enthusiasm that has made so many great scholars as useless to the Church as tinkling cymbals, and all Christendom a mere Babel of learned confusion.'[6] Instead of being blameable, the enthusiasm which meant perfect dependence on the immediate inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit in the whole course of life was one, he said, in which every good Christian should endeavour to live and die.[7] But he was too wise a man not to warn his readers against expecting uncommon illuminations, visions, and voices, and revelations of mysteries. Extraordinary operations of the Holy Spirit granted to men

[1] *Letters*, in Tighe, 73; and *Spirit of Love*, pt. ii. 107–8.
[2] *Spirit of Love*, pt. ii. 80. [3] Id. 112–9.
[4] *Appeal*, &c., 301–13.
[5] *Spirit of Love*, pt. ii. 46. *Spirit of Prayer*, pt. i. 55.
[6] *Answer to Dr. Trapp*, 87. [7] *Appeal*, &c., 310–3,

raised up as burning and shining lights are not matters of common instruction.[1] Many a fiery zealot would be fitly rebuked by his words, 'Would you know the sublime, the exalted, the angelic in the Christian life, see what the Son of God saith, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." And without these two things no good light ever can arise or enter into your soul.'[2]

John Byrom, whose life and poetical writings will be found in Chalmers' edition of the British poets, has already been slightly referred to. His works would demand more attention at this point, were they not to a great degree an echo in rhyme of William Law's prose works. One of his longest poems was written in 1751, on the publication of Law's 'Appeal,' &c., upon the subject of 'Enthusiasm.' It may be said of it, as of several other pieces he has left, that although written in very pedestrian verse, they are worth reading, as containing some thoughtful remarks, expressed occasionally with a good deal of epigrammatic force. A few of his hymns and short meditations rise to a higher poetical level. They are referred to with much praise by Mr. G. Macdonald,[3] who adds the just remark that 'The mystical thinker will ever be found the reviver of religious poetry.' Like Law, John Byrom was a great admirer of Behmen. He learnt High Dutch for the purpose of studying him in the original, and, nowise daunted by the many dark parables he found there, paraphrased in his halting rhymes what Socrates had said of Heraclitus :—

> All that I understand is good and true,
> And what I don't, is I believe so too.[4]

The same influences, springing from a German origin, which thus deeply and directly impressed William Law, and a few other devout men of the same type of thought, acted upon the national mind far more widely, but also far more indirectly, through a different channel. The Moravian brethren, though dating in the first instance from the time of Huss, owed their resuscitation to that wave of mystic pietism which passed through Germany in the seventeenth century,[5] showing its early power in the writings of Behmen, and reaching its full tide in the new vigour of spiritual life inspired into the Lutheran Church by the activity of

[1] *Spirit of Prayer*, pt. ii. 202. [2] Id.
[3] G. Macdonald's *England's Antiphon*, 288.
[4] Chalmers' *English Poets*, xv. 269. *Thoughts on Human Reason.*
[5] M. J. Matter, *Histoire de Christianisme*, vol. iv. 347. H. J. Rose, *Protestantism in Germany*, 46–9. Dorner's *History of Protestant Theology*, ii. 217–227.

Arndt and Spener. Their work was carried on by Francke, 'the S. Vincent de Paul of Germany.' Educated by him, and trained up in the teaching of Spener's School at Halle, Count Zinzendorf imbibed those principles which he carried out with such remarkable success in his Moravian settlement at Herrnhut. There he organised a community to which their severest critics have never refused a high amount of admiration; a society which set itself with simple zeal to lead a Christian life after the primitive model —frugal, quiet, industrious, shunning temptation and avoiding controversy,—a band of brethren who held out the hand of fellowship to all in every communion who, without giving up a single distinctive tenet, would unite with them in a union of godly living—which sent out labourers into Christian countries to convert but not to proselytise—whose missionaries were to be found among the remotest heathen savages. That they should fall short of their ideal was but human weakness; and no doubt they had their special failings. They might be apt, in the fervency of their zeal, to speak too disdainfully of all gifts of learning;[1] they might risk alternations of distressing doubt by too presumptuous expectations of visible supernatural help;[2] they might think too lightly of all outward aids to religion.[3] Such errors might, and sometimes did, prove very dangerous. But one who knew them well, and to whom, as his mind expanded, their too parental discipline, their timid fears of reasoning, their painful straining for experiences, had become intolerable, could yet say of them, 'There is not throughout Christendom, in our day, a form of public worship which expresses more thoroughly the spirit of true Christian piety, than does that of the Herrnhut brotherhood. . . . It is the truest Christian community, I believe, which exists in the outward world.'[4]

The first Diaspora, or missionary colony, established by the Moravians in England was in 1728, at the instance of a lady in that centre of intellectual and religious activity, the Court of Queen Caroline. They did not, however, attract much attention. Whiston, ever inquisitive and unsettled, wanted to know more about them, and began to read some of their sermons, but 'found so much weakness and enthusiasm mixed with a great degree of seriousness,' that he did not care to go to their worship.[5] Their strictly organised discipline was in itself a great impediment to

[1] Matter, *Histoire*, &c., 348.
[2] Lavington's *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists*, 1747, § 14.
[3] Id. 20.
[4] Schleiermacher, in a Letter to his Sister, 1805; F. Rowan's *Life of Schleiermacher*, ii. 23.
[5] Whiston's *Life*, by Himself, 575.

success among a people so naturally attached to liberty as the English. In the middle of the century, their missionary enterprise secured them special privileges in the American colonies. More than this. At the instance of Gambold, who was exceedingly anxious that the Brotherhood should gain ground in England within the bosom of the Anglican Church, a Moravian synod, held in 1749, formally elected Wilson, the venerable Bishop of Sodor and Man, 'into the order and number of the Antecessors of the General Synod of the brethren of the Anatolic Unity.' With this high-sounding dignity was joined 'the administration of the Reformed Tropus' (or Diaspora) 'in our hierarchy, for life, with full liberty, in case of emergency, to employ as his substitute the Rev. T. Wilson, Royal Almoner, Doctor of Theology, and Prebendary of St. Peter's, Westminster.' It is further added that the good old man accepted the office with thankfulness and pleasure.[1] Here their success ended. Soon afterwards many of the English Moravians fell for a time into a most unsatisfactory condition, becoming largely tainted with Antinomianism, and with a sort of vulgar lusciousness of religious sentiment, which was exceedingly revolting to ordinary English feeling.[2] After the death of Zinzendorf in 1760, the Society recovered for the most part a healthier condition,[3] but did not regain any prospect of that wider influence in England which Gambold and others had once begun to hope for, and perhaps to anticipate.

Warburton said of Methodism, that 'William Law was its father, and Count Zinzendorf rocked the cradle.'[4] The remark was no doubt a somewhat galling one to Wesley, for he had afterwards conceived a great abhorrence of the opinions both of the father and the nurse. But it was perfectly just; and Wesley, though he might have been unwilling to own it, was greatly and permanently indebted to each. The light which, when he read Law's 'Christian Perfection and Serious Call,' had 'flowed so mightily on his soul that everything appeared in a new view,' was rekindled into a still more fervent flame by the glowing words of the Moravian teacher on the morning of the day from which he dated his special 'conversion.' Nor was his connection with men of this general turn of thought by any

[1] Hatton's *Memoirs*, p. 246, quoted in L. Tyerman's 'Life of J. Gambold,' in his *Oxford Methodists*, 188. Archbishop Potter, in 1737, wrote a Latin letter to Zinzendorf, full of sympathy and interest. It is given in Doddridge's *Correspondence*, v. 264.

[2] Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History*, 1758, vol. v. 86. Doddridge's *Correspondence*, v. 271, note. Remarks on Stinstra's 'Letters,' in J. Hughes' *Correspondence*, 1772, ii. 204–5.

[3] Tyerman, *Oxford Methodists*, 197.

[4] Warburton's 'Doctrine of Grace,' chap. vi.—*Works*, 1788, 4, 626.

means a passing one. His visit to William Law at Mr. Gibbon's house at Putney in 1732—the correspondence he carried on with him for several years afterwards—his readings of the mystic divines of Germany—his loving respect for the company of Moravians who were his fellow-travellers to Georgia in 1736—his meeting with Peter Böhler in 1738—the close intercourse which followed with the London Moravians—the fortnight spent by him at Herrnhut, 'exceedingly strengthened and comforted by the conversation of this lovely people,'[1]—his intimate friendship with Gambold, who afterwards completely threw in his lot with the United Brethren and became one of their bishops,[2]—all these incidents betoken a deep and cordial sympathy. It is true that all this fellow-feeling came at last to a somewhat abrupt termination. Passing, at first, almost to the bitter extreme, he even said in his 'Second Journal' that 'he believed the mystic writers to be one great Anti-Christ.'[3] Some years afterwards he retracted this expression, as being far too strong. He had, he said, 'at one time held the mystic writers in great veneration as the best explainers of the Gospel of Christ;'[4] but added, that though he admired them, he was never of their way; he distrusted their tendency to disparage outward means. 'Their divinity was never the Methodist doctrine. We cannot swallow either John Tauler or Jacob Behmen.'[5] His friendly correspondence with Law ceased after a few years. He continued to 'admire and love' his personal character, but attacked his opinions[6] with a vehemence contrasting somewhat unfavourably with the patience and humility of Law's reply.[7] As for the Moravians, not Warburton, nor Lavington, nor Stinstra, nor Duncombe, ever used stronger words against 'these most dangerous of the Antinomians—these cunning hunters.'[8] Count Zinzendorf, on the other hand, published a notice that his people had no connection with the Wesleys.

Like many other men who have been distinguished in divinity and religion,[9] John Wesley, as he grew older, became far more

[1] Wesley's *Journal*. Quoted in *Wesley's Life*, Religious Tract Society, 34.

[2] 'Life of Gambold,' in L. Tyerman's *Oxford Methodists*, 155-200.

[3] *Second Journal*, p. 26–7. (Quoted by Lavington, § 21); and *Works*, ed. x. 438.

[4] 'Remarks on Mr. Hill's Review, &c.—*Works*, x. 438.

[5] 'Answer to Lavington.'—*Works*, ix. 49.

[6] 'Letter to Mr. Law.'—*Works*, ix. 466–509.

[7] I. Taylor, *Wesley and Methodism*, 33.

[8] 'Short View,' &c. *Works*, x. 201. 'My soul,' he wrote in one of his journals, 'is sick of their *sublime* divinity.' Quoted in H. Curteis, *Dissent in Relation to the Church of England*, 366.

[9] Dean Stanley instances, in addition to Wesley, Athanasius, Augustine, Luther, and Baxter.—*Speech at Edinburgh*, January 2, 1872.

charitable and large-hearted in what he said or thought of opinions different from his own. Methodism also had become, by that time, well established upon a secure basis of its own. Wesley had no longer cause to be disturbed by its features of relationship with a school of theology which he had learnt greatly to distrust. The fanciful and obscure philosophy of Dionysius, of Behmen, or of Law had been repugnant to him from the first. He had beheld with the greatest alarm Law's departures from commonly received doctrine on points connected with justification, regeneration, the atonement, the future state. Above all, he had become acquainted with that most degenerate form of mysticism, when its phraseology becomes a pretext to fanatics and Antinomians. Much in the same way as in the Germany of the fourteenth century the lawless Brethren of the Free Spirit [1] had justified their excesses in language which they borrowed from men of such noble and holy life as Eckhart [2] and Tauler, and Nicolas of Basle, so the flagitious conduct, at Bedford and elsewhere, of some who called themselves Moravians threw scandal and odium on the tenets of the pure and simple-minded community of Herrnhut. This was a danger to which Wesley was, without doubt, all the more sensitive, because he lived among hostile critics who were only too ready to discredit his teaching by similar imputations on its tendencies. The truth is that Methodism, in its different aspects, had so many points of contact with the essential characteristics of mysticism, both in its highest and more spiritualised, and in its grosser and more fanatical forms, that Wesley was exceedingly anxious his system should not be confused with any such 'enthusiasm,' and dwelt with jealous care upon its more distinctive features.

It has been already observed that a French historian of Christianity speaks of Quakerism and Methodism as the two chief forms of English mysticism.[3] To an educated man of ordinary observation in the eighteenth century, especially if he regarded the new movement with distrust, the analogy between this and different or earlier varieties of 'enthusiasm' appeared still more complete. Lord Lyttelton, for example, in discussing a favourite theological topic of that age—namely, the absence of enthusiasm in St. Paul, and his constant appeals to the evidence of reason and the senses—contrasts with the life and writings of the Apostles the extravagant imaginations, and the pretensions to

[1] S. Winkworth's *Tauler's Life and Times*, 86.

[2] Id.; also a review of F. Pfeiffer's 2nd vol. of *Deutsche Mystiker* (Meister Eckhart) in *Saturday Review*, January 9, 1858, and *British Quarterly*, October 1874, 300-5.

[3] M. J. Matter's *Histoire du Christianisme*, 4, 343.

Divine illumination, of 'mystics, ancient and modern,' mediæval saints, 'Protestant sectaries of the last age, and some of the Methodists now.'[1] Montanus and Dionysius, St. Francis and Ignatius Loyola, Madame Bourignon, George Fox, and Whitefield are all ranked together in the same general category. Methodists, Moravians, and Hutchinsonians are classed as all nearly-related members of one family. Just in the same way[2] Bishop Lavington, in his 'Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists,' has entered into an elaborate comparison between what he finds in Wesley's journals and in the lives and writings of saints and mystics of the Roman Church.[3] Nor does he fail to discover similar resemblances to Methodist experiences among the old mystic philosophers, Montanists, Quakers, French Quietists, French prophets, and Moravians. The argumentative value of Lavington's book may be taken for what it was worth. To his own contemporaries it appeared the achievement of a great triumph if he could prove in frequent cases an almost identical tone of thought in Wesley and in Francis of Assisi or Francis de Sales. To most minds in our own days it will rather seem as if he were constantly dealing blows which only rebounded upon himself, in comparing his opponent to men whose deep piety and self-denying virtues, however much tinged by the errors of their time and order, worked wonders in the revival of earnest faith. On the whole Lavington proved his case successfully, but he only proved by what easy transitions the purest and most exalted faith may pass into extravagances, and, above all, the folly of his own Church in not endeavouring to find scope for her enthusiasts and mystics, as Rome had done for a Loyola and a St. Theresa. He himself was a typical example of the tone of thought out of which this infatuation grew. What other views could be looked for from a bishop who, though himself an awakening preacher and a good man, whose dying words[4] were an ascription of glory to God (δόξα τῷ Θεῷ), was yet so wholly blind to the more intense manifestations of religious fervour that he could see nothing to admire, nothing even to approve, in the burning zeal of the founders of the Franciscans and of the Jesuits? Of the first he had nothing more to say than that he was 'at first only a well-minded but weak enthusiast, afterwards a mere hypocrite and impostor;' of the other he spoke with a certain compassion as 'that errant, shatter-brained, visionary fanatic.'[5] And the Methodist, he thought, had a somewhat 'similar texture of brain.'

[1] *Works of George, Lord Lyttelton*, 239. [2] Id. 271.
[3] *Enthusiasm of Romanists and Methodists Compared*, passim.
[4] Polwhele's *Introduction to Lavington*, clxxx.
[5] Lavington's *Enthusiasm*, &c., § 2.

The Methodist leaders were wholly free from some dangerous tendencies which mysticism has been apt to develop. They never disparaged any of the external aids to religion; their meaning is never hidden under a haze of dim conceptions; above all, they never showed the slightest inclination to the vague and unpractical pantheistic opinions which are often nurtured by a too exclusive insistance on the indwelling and pervading operations of the Divine Spirit. In the two latter points they resembled the Quietist and Port-Royal mystics of the French school, who always aimed at lucidity of thought and language, rather than those of German origin. From mystics generally they differed, most of all, in adopting the Pauline rather than the Johannine phraseology.

But, with some important differences, there can be no question that Methodism rose and prospered under the same influences which in every age of Christianity, or rather in every age of the world, have attended all the most notable outbursts of mystic revivalism. Its causes were the same; its higher manifestations were much the same; its degenerate and exaggerated forms were the same; its primary and most essential principle was the same. As the religious brotherhoods of the Pythagoreans rose in spiritual revolt against the lax mythology and careless living of the Sybarites in Sicily;[1] as in the third century of the Christian era Neoplatonism concentrated within itself whatever remains of faith and piety lingered in the creeds and philosophies of paganism;[2] as in the Middle Ages devout men, wearied with forms and controversies, and scholastic reasoners seeking refuge from the logical and metaphysical problems with which they had perplexed theology, sought more direct communion with God in the mystic devotion of Anselm and Bernard, of Hugo and Bonaventura;[3] as Bertholdt and Nicolas, Eckhart and Tauler,[4] organised their new societies throughout Germany to meet great spiritual needs which established systems had wholly ceased to satisfy; as Arndt and Spener and Francke in the seventeenth century breathed new life into the Lutheran Church, and set on foot their 'collegia pietatis,' their systematised prayer-meetings, to supplement the deficiencies of the time[5]—so in the England of

[1] G. Grote's *History of Greece*, chap. xxxvii. There is a full and interesting account of the Pythagorean revival in Dr. F. Schwartz's *Geschichte der Erziehung*, 1829, 301–21.

[2] H. H. Milman, *Early History of Christianity*, 1840, ii. 237.

[3] H. H. Milman, *Lat. Christianity*, 1857, iii. 270, vi. 263, 287; R. A. Vaughan, *Hours with the Mystics*, i. 49, 152.

[4] Milman's *Lat. Christianity*, vi. 371–80; Winkworth's *Life and Times of Tauler*, 186.

[5] M. J. Matter's *Histoire du Christianisme*, 4, 347; H. T. Rose, *Protestantism in Germany*, 50.

the eighteenth century, when the force of religion was chilled by drowsiness and indifference in some quarters, by stiffness and formality and over-cautious orthodoxy in others, when the aspirations of the soul were being ever bidden rest satisfied with the calculations of sober reason, when proofs and evidences and demonstrations were offered, and still offered, to meet the cry of those who called for light, how else should religion stem the swelling tide of profligacy but by some such inward spiritual revival as those by which it had heretofore renewed its strength? If Wesley and Whitefield and their fellow-workers had not come to the rescue, no doubt other reformers of a somewhat kindred spirit would have risen in their stead. How or whence it is useless to speculate. Perhaps Quakerism, or something nearly akin to it, might have assumed the dimensions to which a half-century before it had seemed not unlikely to grow. The way was prepared for some strong reaction. Past aberrations of enthusiasm were well-nigh forgotten, and large masses of the population were unconsciously longing for its warmth and fire. It was highly probable that an active religious movement was near at hand, and its general nature might be fairly conjectured; its specific character, its force, extent, and limits, would depend, under Providence, upon the zeal and genius of its leaders.

Nothing could be more natural than that to many outside observers early Methodism should have seemed a mere repetition of what England, in the century before, had been only too familiar with. The physical phenomena which manifested themselves under the influence of Wesley's and Whitefield's preaching were in all points exactly the same as those of which the annals of imaginative and excited religious feeling have in every age been full. Swoons and strange convulsive agitations, however impressive and even awe-inspiring to an uninformed beholder, were undistinguishable from those, for example, which had given their name to English Quakers[1] and French Convulsionists,[2] which were to be read of in the Lives of Guyon and St. Theresa,[3] and which were a matter of continual occurrence when Tauler preached in Germany.[4] It is no part of this inquiry to dwell upon their cause and nature, or upon the perplexity Wesley himself felt on the subject. Occasionally he was mortified by the discovery of imposture or of superstitious credulity, and some-

[1] C. Leslie's *Works*, 'The Snake in the Grass,' and 'Defence, &c.' Id. vols. iv. and v. passim; R. A. Vaughan's *Hours with the Mystics*, ii. 255–60. Barclay's *Apology*, 339.

[2] N. Spinckes, *New Pretenders to Prophecy*, 1709, 402, &c.

[3] Vaughan, ii. 165–208.

[4] Winkworth's *Life of Tauler*, 172.

thing he was willing to attribute to natural causes.[1] On the whole his opinion was that they might be rejoiced in as a glorious sight,[2] visible evidences of life-giving spiritual agencies, but that the bodily pain was quite distinct and due to Satan's hindrance.[3] He sometimes added a needful warning that all such physical disturbances were of a doubtful nature, and that the only tests of spiritual change which could be relied upon were those indisputable fruits of the Spirit which the Apostle Paul enumerates.[4] His less guarded words closely correspond with what may be read in the journals of G. Fox and other early Quakers. When he writes more coolly and reflectively we are reminded not of the first fanatical originators of that sect, but of what their distinguished apologist, Barclay, has said of those 'pangs of the new birth' which have often accompanied the sudden awakening to spiritual life in persons of strong and undisciplined feelings. 'From their inward travail, while the darkness seeks to obscure the light and the light breaks through the darkness . . . there will be such a painful travail found in the soul that will even work upon the outward man, so that oftentimes through the working thereof the body will be greatly shaken, and many groans, and sighs, and tears, will lay hold upon it.'[5]

Wesley himself was protected both by disposition and training from falling deeply into some of the dangers to which enthusiastic and mystical religion is very liable. He was credulous, and even superstitious, but he checked his followers in the credence which many of them were inclined to give to stories of ecstasies, and visions, and revelations. He spoke slightingly of orthodoxy, and held that 'right opinions were a very slender part of religion;'[6] but, far from countenancing anything like a vague undogmatic Pietism, his opinions went almost to the opposite extreme of precise definition. Neither could it be said of him that he spiritualised away the plain meaning of Scripture—a charge to which the old Quakers were constantly liable, and which was sometimes alleged against the later Methodists. He himself never spoke contemptuously—as the mystics have been so apt to do—of the value of learning; and of reason he said, in the true spirit of Henry More, 'I believe and reason too, for I

[1] J. Wesley, 'Letter to the Bishop of Gloucester.'—*Works*, ix. 137, 142.

[2] Wesley's *Journal*, quoted by Lavington, *Enthusiasm*, &c., 271.

[3] *Works*, ix. 121; and *Journal*, 1738-43, quoted by Warburton, 'Doctrine of Grace.'—*Works*, iv. 605–75.

[4] *Works*, ix. 143.

[5] Barclay's *Apology*, 339. Cf. Wesley's 'Letter to W. Downes,' 1759. *Works*, ix. 104–5.

[6] Wesley's *Plain Account of the People called the Methodists*, 6th ed. 1764, 4.

find no inconsistency between them. And I would as soon put out my eyes to secure my faith, as lay aside my reason.'[1] But the Methodists, as a body, were far less inclined to act on this principle. Without disparagement to the conspicuous ability of some individual members of their communion, both in the present and in the past, it may be certainly said that they have always utterly failed to attract the intellect of the country at large. Great, therefore, as was its moral and spiritual power among large classes of the people, Methodism was never able to take rank among great national reformations.

Neither Wesley nor the Wesleyans have ever yielded to a mischievous tendency which has beset most forms of mysticism. They have never, in comparison with the inward worship of the soul, spoken slightingly of 'temples made of stones,'[2] or of any of the chief outward ordinances of religion. Their opponents often attempted to make it a charge against them, and thought, no doubt, they would be sure to prove it. But they never did so. Wesley was always able to answer, with perfect correctness, that what was thus said might be true of Moravians, or of Tauler, or of Behmen, or of St. Theresa, or of Madame de Bourignon, or of the Quakers, or even of William Law, but that he himself had never done otherwise than insist most strongly on the essential need of making use of all the external helps which religion can offer.[3]

By far the gravest imputation that has ever been brought against the disciples of each various form of mystical or emotional religion is that, in aspiring after some loftier ideal of spiritual communion with the Divine, they have looked down with a kind of scorn upon 'mere morality,' as if it were a lower path. And it must be acknowledged that men of the most pure and saintly lives have, nevertheless, used expressions which misguided or unprincipled men might pervert into authority for lawlessness. Tauler, whom an admiring contemporary once called 'the holiest of God's children now living on the earth,'[4] could yet say of the higher elevation of the Christian life that, 'where this comes to pass, outward works become of no moment.'[5] What wonder that the fanatical Beghards, or Brethren of the Free Spirit, against whom he contended with all his energies,[6] should seek to confuse his principles with theirs, and assert that, having attained the

[1] 'Predestination calmly considered,' 1745.—*Works*, x. 267.
[2] Behmen, *Three Principles*, chap. xxvi.
[3] 'Answer to Lavington.'—*Works*, ix. 50; 'Letter to Mr. Law,' id. 505.
[4] Winkworth's *Life, &c., of Tauler*, 96
[5] Tauler, 'Sermon for Third Sunday after Epiphany,' id. 223.
[6] Id. 86, 137–8.

higher state, they were not under subjection to moral commandments? So, again, of the early Quakers Henry More [1] observed that, although their doctrine of special illumination had guided many into much sanctity of life, the more licentious sort had perverted it into a cloke for all kinds of enormity, on the ground that they were inspired by God, and could be guilty of no sin, as only exercising their rights of liberty. Madame de Bourignon was an excellent woman, but Leslie and Lavington [2] showed that some of her writings seem dangerously to underrate good works. Moravian principles, rightly understood, made Herrnhut a model Christian community; misunderstood, they became pretexts for the most dangerous Antinomianism.[3] An example may even be quoted from the last century where the nobler elements of mystic enthusiasm were found in one mind combined with the pernicious tendency in question. In that very remarkable but eccentric genius, William Blake, mysticism was rich in fruits of faith and love, and it is needless, therefore, to add that he was a good man, of blameless morals; yet, by a strange flaw or partial derangement in his profoundly spiritual nature, 'he was for ever, in his writings, girding at the "mere moral law" as the letter that killeth. His conversation, his writings, his designs, were equally marked by theoretic licence and virtual guilelessness.' [4]

Bishop Berkeley's name could not be passed over even in such a sketch as this without a sense of incompleteness. He was, it is true, strongly possessed with the prevalent feeling of aversion to anything that was called enthusiasm. When, for example, his opinion was asked about John Hutchinson—a writer whose mystic fancies as to recondite meanings contained in the words of the Hebrew Bible [5] possessed a strange fascination for William Jones of Nayland, Bishop Horne, and other men of some note [6]—he answered that he was not acquainted with his works, but 'I

[1] H. More's note to § 44 of *Enthus. Triumphatus.*

[2] C. Leslie, *Works*, iv. 5–8; Lavington, 346.

[3] Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History*, 1758, v. 86 (note); Tyerman, *Oxford Methodists*, 194; Wesley, continually; &c.

[4] A. Gilchrist's *Life of W. Blake*, 331.

[5] Warburton called him and his followers 'our new Cabalists.'—Letter to Doddridge, May 27, 1758.

[6] A full statement of Hutchinson's views may be found in the *Works of G. Horne*, by W. Jones (of Nayland), Pref. xix–xxiii, 20–23, &c. His own views were visionary and extreme. Natural religion, for example, he called 'the religion of Satan and of Antichrist' (id. xix). But he had many admirers, including many young men of promise at Oxford (id. 81). They were attracted by the earnestness of his opposition to some theological tendencies of the age. It was to this reactionary feeling that his repute was chiefly owing. 'Of Mr. Hutchinson we hear but little; his name was the match that gave fire to the train' (id. 92).

have observed him to be mentioned as an enthusiast, which gave me no prepossession in his favour.'[1] But the Christianity of feeling, which lies at the root of all that is sound and true in what the age called enthusiasm, was much encouraged by the theology and philosophy of Berkeley. It may not have been so to any great extent among his actual contemporaries. A thoroughly prosaic generation, such as that was in which he lived, was too unable to appreciate his subtle and poetic intellect to gain much instruction from it. He was much admired, but little understood. 'He is indeed,' wrote Warburton to Hurd, 'a great man, and the only visionary I ever knew that was.'[2] It was left for later reasoners, in England and on the Continent, to separate what may be rightly called visionary in his writings from what may be profoundly true, and to feel the due influence of his suggestive and spiritual reflections.

The purely mystic element in Berkeley's philosophy may be illustrated by the charm it had for William Blake, a man of whom Mr. Swinburne says that 'his hardest facts were the vaguest allegories of other men. To him all symbolic things were literal, all literal things symbolic. About his path and about his bed, around his ears and under his eyes, an infinite play of spiritual life seethed and swarmed or shone and sang.'[3] To this strange artist-poet, in whose powerful but fantastic mind fact and imagination were inextricably blended, whose most intimate friends could not tell where talent ended and hallucination began, whom Wordsworth delighted in,[4] and whose conversation in any country walk is described as having a marvellous power of kindling the imagination, and of making nature itself seem strangely more spiritual, almost as if a new sense had awakened in the

[1] Berkeley to Johnson, July 25, 1751. – *G. Berkeley's Life and Works*, ed. A. C. Fraser, iv. 326.

[2] Warburton and Hurd's *Correspondence*, Letter xx.

[3] Alg. C. Swinburne, *W. Blake : a Critical Essay*, 41.

[4] A. Gilchrist's *Life of W. Blake*, i. 303.

It was not only that Wordsworth was at one with Blake in his intense feeling of the mysterious loveliness of nature. There is also an occasional vein of mysticism in his poetry. Thus it is observed in Ch. Wordsworth's *Memoirs of his Life* (p. 111), that his *Expostulation and Reply* (1798) was a favourite with the Quakers. It is the poem in which these verses occur :—

'Nor less I deem that there are powers
Which of themselves our minds impress ;
That we can feed these minds of ours
In a wise passiveness.
Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking ?'—*Poems*, iv. 180.

mind of his hearer[1]—to William Blake the theories of Berkeley supplied a philosophy which exactly suited him.[2] Blake's ruling idea was that of an infinite spiritual life so imprisoned under the bondage of material forces[3] that only by spiritual perception—a power given to all to cultivate—can true existence be discovered.[4] He longed for the full emancipation which a better life would bring.

At the very close of the century, in the year 1798, an elaborate treatise on enthusiasm was published by Richard Graves, Dean of Ardagh, a man of considerable learning and earnest piety. It is needless to enter into the arguments of his 'Essay on the Character of the Apostles and Evangelists.' Its object was to prove they were wholly free from the errors of enthusiasts; that in their private conduct, and in the government of the Church, they were 'rational and sober, prudent and cautious, mild and decorous, zealous without violence, and steady without obstinacy;' that their writings are plain, calm, and unexaggerated, ... natural and rational, ... without any trace of spiritual pride, any arrogant claims to full perfection of virtue; . . . . teaching heartfelt piety to God without any affectation of rapturous ecstasy or extravagant fervour.'[5] On the other hand, he illustrates the extravagances into which enthusiasts have been led, from the history of Indian mystics and Greek Neoplatonists, from Manichæans and Montanists, from monastic saints, from the Beghards of Germany, the Fratricelli of Italy, the Illuminati of Spain, the Quietists of France, from Anabaptists, Quakers, and French prophets. He refers to what had been written against enthusiasm within the preceding century by Stillingfleet, Bayle, Locke, Hicks, Shaftesbury, Lord Lyttelton, Barrington, Chandler, Archibald Campbell, Stinstra, Warburton, Lavington, and Douglas—a list the length of which is in itself a sufficient evidence of the sensitive interest which the subject had excited. He remarks on the attempts made by Chubb and Morgan to attach to Christianity the opprobrium of being an enthusiastic religion, and reprobates the assertions of the younger Dodwell that *faith* is not founded on argument. The special occasion of his work[6] arose out of more recent events—the publication at Geneva in 1791 of Boulanger's 'Christianity Unmasked,' and the many similar efforts made during the period of the French Revolution to represent fanaticism and Christianity as synonymous terms.

But while Dean Graves was writing in careful and moderate

[1] Gilchrist, i. 311.
[2] Id. 190–1.
[3] Swinburne, 274.
[4] Gilchrist, 321.
[5] R. Graves's *Works*, 'The Apostles not Enthusiasts,' i. 199–200.
[6] Id., *Memoirs*, i. lvi.

language his not unseasonable warnings, thoughts representative of a new and deeper strain of theological feeling were passing through the mind of Samuel Coleridge. His was a genius singularly receptive of the ideas which emanated from the leading intellect of his age in England or abroad. He was probably better acquainted than any other of his countrymen with the highest literature of Germany, which found in him not only an interpreter, but a most able and reflective exponent. Few could be better fitted than he was—no one certainly in his own country and generation—to deal with those subtle and intricate elements of human nature upon which enthusiasts and mystics have based their speculations, and hopelessly blended together much that is sublime and true with not a little that is groundless and visionary, and often dangerous in its practical or speculative results. In the first place, he could scarcely fail in sympathy. He was endowed with a rich vein of that imaginative power which is the very life of all enthusiasm. It is the most prominent characteristic of his poetry ; it is no less conspicuous in the intense glow of excited expectation with which he, like so many other young men of rising talent, cherished those millennial visions of peace and brotherhood, and simple faith and love, which the French Revolution in its progress so rudely crushed. Mysticism also must have had great charms for one who could write verses so imbued with its spirit as are the following :—

> He first by fear uncharmed the drowsèd soul,
> Till of its nobler nature it 'gan feel
> Dim recollections ; and thence soared to hope,
> Strong to believe whate'er of mystic good
> The Eternal dooms for His immortal sons ;
> From hope and firmer faith to perfect love
> Attracted and absorbed ; and centred there,
> God only to behold, and know, and feel,
> Till by exclusive consciousness of God,
> All self annihilated, it shall make
> God its identity—God all in all !
> We and our Father one !
> And blest are they
> Who in this fleshy world, the elect of heaven,
> Their strong eye darting through the deeds of men,
> Adore with steadfast, unpresuming gaze
> Him, nature's essence, mind, and energy ;
> And gazing, trembling, patiently ascend,
> Treading beneath their feet all visible things
> As steps, that upward to their Father's throne
> Lead gradual.[1]

[1] S. T. Coleridge's *Poetical Works*, 'Religious Musings,' i. 83-4.

If we would further understand how far removed must have been Coleridge's tone of thought from that which for so long a time had regarded enthusiasm in all its forms as the greatest enemy of sober reason and sound religion, we should only have to consider what a new world of thought and sentiment was that in which Coleridge was living from any of which the generation before him had experience. The band of poets and essayists represented by Coleridge and Wordsworth, Southey, Lamb, De Quincey, and we may add Blake, were in many respects separated by a wider gulf, except only in time, from the authors of twenty years before, than they were from the writers of the Elizabethan age. New hopes and aspirations as to the capabilities of human life, new and more spiritual aspects of nature, of art, of poetry, of history, made it impossible for those who felt these influences in all the freshness of their new life to look with the same eyes as their fathers on those questions above all others which related to the intellectual and spiritual faculties of the soul. It was a worthy aim for a poet-philosopher such as Coleridge was—a mystic and enthusiast in one aspect of his mind, a devoted 'friend of reason' in another—to analyse reason and unite its sublimer powers with conscience as a divinely given 'inner light,' to combine in one the highest exercise of the intellectual and the moral faculties. Emotional religion had exhibited on a large scale alike its powers and deficiencies. Thoughtful and religious men could scarcely do better than set themselves to restore the balance where it was unequal. They had to teach that faith must be based, not only upon feeling and undefined impulse, but on solid intellectual apprehension. They had to urge with no less earnestness that religious truth has to be not only outwardly apprehended, but inwardly appropriated before it can become possessed of true spiritual efficacy. It is most true that vague ideas of some inward illumination are but a miserable substitute for a sound historical faith, but it is no less true that a so-called historical faith has not become faith at all until the soul has received it into itself, and made of it an inward light. In the eighteenth century, as in every other, mystics and enthusiasts have insisted only on inward illuminations and spiritual experiences, while of men of a very different cast of mind some have perpetually harped upon authority and some upon reason and reasonableness. It may be hoped that our own century may be more successful in the difficult but not discouraging task of investigating and harmonising their respective claims.

C. J. A.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHURCH ABUSES.

Never since her Reformation had the Church of England given so fair a promise of a useful and prosperous career as she did at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Everything seemed to be in her favour. In 1702 a sovereign ascended the throne who was enthusiastically devoted to her interests, and endeavoured to live according to the spirit of her teaching. The two great political parties were both bidding for her support. Each accused the other of being her enemy, as the worst accusation that could be brought against them. The most effective cry which the Whigs could raise against the Tories was, that they were imperilling the Church by dallying with France and Rome; the most effective cry which the Tories could raise against the Whigs was, that the Church was in danger under an administration which favoured sectaries and heretics. Both parties vehemently denied the charge, and represented themselves as the truest friends of the Church. Had they done otherwise they would have forfeited at once the national confidence. For the nation at large, and the lower classes even more than the higher, were vehement partisans of the National Church. The now unusual spectacle of a High Church mob was then not at all unusual.[1] The enemies of the Church seemed to be effectually silenced. Rome had tried her strength against her and had failed—failed in argument and failed in policy. Protestant Dissent was declining in numbers, in influence, and in ability. Both Romanists and Nonconformists would have been only too thankful to have been allowed to enjoy their own opinions in peace, without attempting any aggressive work against the dominant Church.

Sad indeed is the contrast between the promise and the performance. Look at the Church of the eighteenth century in prospect, and a bright scene of uninterrupted triumph might be anticipated. Look at it in retrospect, as it is pictured by many writers of every school of thought, and a dark scene of melancholy failure presents itself. Not that this latter view is altogether a correct one. Many as were the shortcomings of the English Church of this period, her condition was not so bad as it has been represented.

In the early part of the century the Nonjurors not unnaturally

[1] In 1705, 1706, 1710, 1711, 1714, 1715, &c. &c., there were High Church mobs.

regarded with a somewhat jealous eye those who stepped into the places from which they for conscience' sake had been excluded, and the accounts which they have left us of the abuses existing in the Church which had turned them adrift must not be accepted without some allowance for the circumstances under which they were written. The Deists, again, taking their stand on the absolute perfection and sufficiency of natural religion, and the consequent needlessness of any further revelation, would obviously strengthen their position if they could show that the ministers of Christianity were, as a matter of fact, faithless and useless. Hence the Church and her ministers were favourite topics for their invectives. The reputation of the Church suffered, perhaps, still more from the attacks of the free-livers than from those of the free-thinkers. The strictures of the latter formed part of the great Deistical controversy, and were therefore replied to by the champions of orthodoxy; but the reckless aspersions of the former, not being bound up with any controversy, were for the most part suffered to pass unchallenged. Then, again, the leaders of the Evangelical revival, who were misunderstood, and in many cases cruelly treated, by the clergy of their day, could scarcely help taking the gloomiest possible view of the state of the Church at large, and were hardly in a position to appreciate the really good points of men who were violently prejudiced against themselves; while their biographers in later times have been too apt to bring out in stronger relief the brightness of their heroes' portraits by making the background as dark as possible.

Thus various causes have contributed to bring into prominence the abuses of the Church of the eighteenth century, and to throw its merits into the shade.

Still, after making full allowance for the distorting influence of prejudice on many sides, there remains a wide margin which no amount of prejudice can account for. 'Church abuses' must still form a painfully conspicuous feature in any sketch of the ecclesiastical history of the period.

Before entering into the details of these abuses it will be well to specify some of the general causes which tended to paralyse the energies and lower the tone of the Church.

Foremost among these must be placed that very outward prosperity which would seem at the first glance to augur for the Church a useful and prosperous career. But that 'which should have been for her wealth' proved to her 'an occasion of falling.' The peace which she enjoyed made her careless and inactive. The absence of the wholesome stimulus of competition was far from being an unmixed advantage to her. Very soon after the accession of George I., when the voice of Convocation was

hushed, a dead calm set in, so far as the internal affairs of the Church were concerned—a calm which was really more perilous to her than the stormy weather in which she had long been sailing. The discussion of great questions has always a tendency to call forth latent greatness of mind where any exists. But after the second decade of the eighteenth century there was hardly any question *within* the Church to agitate men's minds. There was abundance of controversy with those without, but within all was still. There was nothing to encourage self-sacrifice, and self-sacrifice is essential to promote a healthy spiritual life. The Church partook of the general sordidness of the age ; it was an age of great material prosperity, but of moral and spiritual poverty, such as hardly finds a parallel in our history. Mercenary motives were too predominant everywhere, in the Church as well as in the State.

The characteristic fault of the period was greatly intensified by the influence of one man. The reigns of the first two Georges might not inaptly be termed the Walpolian period. For though Walpole's fall took place before the period closed, yet the principles he had inculcated and acted upon had taken too deep a root in the heart of the nation to fall with his fall. Walpole had learned the wisdom of applying his favourite maxim, '*Quieta non movere*,' to the affairs of the Church before he began to apply it to those of the State. 'In 1710,' writes his biographer, 'Walpole was appointed one of the managers for the impeachment of Sacheverell, and principally conducted that business in the House of Commons. The mischievous consequences of that trial had a permanent effect on the future conduct of Walpole when head of the Administration. It infused into him an aversion and horror at any interposition in the affairs of the Church, and led him to assume occasionally a line of conduct which appeared to militate against those principles of toleration to which he was naturally inclined.'[1] And so his one idea of managing ecclesiastical affairs was to keep things quiet ; he calmed down all opposition to the Church from without, but he conferred a very questionable benefit upon her by this policy.[2]

[1] Coxe's *Memoirs of Sir R. Walpole*, vol. i. pp. 24, 25.

[2] A glaring instance of the blighting effects of the Walpole Ministry upon the Church is to be found in the treatment of Berkeley's attempt to found a university at Bermuda. See a full account of the whole transaction in Wilberforce's *History of the American Church*, ch. iv. pp. 151–160. Mr. Anderson calls it a 'national crime.' See *History of the Colonial Church*, vol. iii. ch. xxix. p. 437, &c. The Duke of Newcastle pursued the same policy. In spite of the efforts of the most influential Churchmen, such as Gibson, Sherlock, and Secker, who all concurred in recognising the need of clergymen, of churches, of schools, in our plantations, 'the

We have seen in the chapter on the Deists how the Church suffered in her practical work from the controversies of her own generation; and no less did she suffer from the effects left by the controversies of a preceding age. The events which had occurred during the seventeenth century had tended to excite an almost morbid dread of extravagance both in the direction of High Church and Low Church principles—according to the nineteenth, not the eighteenth, century's acceptation of those terms. The majority of the clergy shrank, not unnaturally, from anything which might seem in any degree to assimilate them either to Romanism or to Puritanism. Recent experience had shown the danger of both. The violent reaction against the reign of the Saints continued with more or less force almost to the end of the eighteenth century. The fear of Romanism, which had been brought so near home to the nation in the days of James II., was even yet a present danger, at least during the first half of the century. In casting away everything that seemed to savour of either of these two extremes there was a danger of casting away also much that might have been edifying and elevating. On the one hand, ornate and frequent services and symbolism of all kinds were regarded with suspicion, and consequently infrequent services, and especially infrequent communions, carelessness about the Church fabrics, and bad taste in the work that was done, are conspicuous among the Church abuses of the period. On the other side, fervency and vigour in preaching were regarded with suspicion as bordering too nearly upon the habits of the hated Puritans of the Commonwealth, and a dry, dull, moralising style of sermon was the result. And, generally, this fear on both sides engendered a certain timidity and obstructiveness and want of elasticity which prevented the Church from incorporating into her system anything which seemed to diverge one hair's breadth from the groove in which she ran.

Again, the Church was an immense engine of political power. The most able and popular statesmen could not afford to dispense with her aid. The bench of bishops formed so compact a phalanx in the Upper House of the Legislature, and the clergy could and did influence so many elections into the Lower House, that the Church had necessarily to be courted and favoured, often to the great detriment of her spiritual character.

Nor, in touching upon the general causes which impaired the efficiency of the Church during the eighteenth century, must we omit to notice the want of all synodal action. There may be different opinions as to the wisdom or otherwise of the indefinite

mass of inert resistance presented in the office of the Secretary of State, responsible for the colonies, was too great to be overcome.'—Ibid. p. 443

prorogation of Convocation, as it existed in the early years of the eighteenth century. That it was the scene of unseemly disputes, and altogether a turbulent element in the Constitution, when the Ministry of George I. thought good to prorogue it *sine die* in 1717, is not denied; but that the Church should be deprived of the privilege, which every other religious body enjoyed, of discussing in her own assembly her own affairs, was surely in itself an evil. And we must not too hastily assume that she was not then in a condition to discuss them profitably. The proceedings of the later meetings of Convocation in the eighteenth century which are best known are those which concerned subjects of violent altercation. But these were by no means the only subjects suggested for discussion.[1] The re-establishing and rendering useful the office of rural deans, the regulating of marriage licences, the encouragement of charity schools, the establishment of parochial libraries, the licentiousness of the stage, protests against duelling, the want of sufficient church accommodation, the work of Christian missions both to the heathen and our own plantations—these and other thoroughly practical questions are found among the agenda of Convocation during the eighteenth century; and the mention of them suggests some of the very shortcomings with which the Church of the Hanoverian period is charged.

The causes which led to the unhappy disputes between the Upper and Lower Houses were obviously only temporary; it is surely not chimerical to assume that time and a change of circumstances would have brought about a better understanding between the bishops and the inferior clergy, and that Convocation would have seen better days, and have been instrumental in rolling away some at least of the reproaches with which the Church of the day is now loaded.[2] To the action of Convocation in the early part of the eighteenth century the Church was indebted for at least one good work. The building and endowment of the fifty new churches in London would probably never have been projected had not Convocation stirred itself in the matter, and would probably have never been abandoned if Convocation had continued to meet.[3] There was ample room for similar work, of which every good Christian of every school of thought might have approved. And there were many occasions on which it would

[1] Bishop Fitzgerald (*Aids to Faith*, Essay ii. § 7) stigmatises the impotency and turbulence of Convocation, but entirely ignores the practical agenda referred to above. See Cardwell's *Synodalia*, on the period.

[2] See the introduction to Palin's *History of the Church of England from the Revolution to the Last Acts of Convocation.*

[3] See Cardwell's *Synodalia*, xlii.

appear, *primâ facie*, that synodal deliberation might have proved of immense benefit to the Church. For instance, on that very important, but at the time most perplexing, question, 'How should the Church deal with the irregular but most valuable efforts of the Wesleys and Whitefield and their fellow-labourers?' it would have been most desirable for the clergy to have taken counsel together in their own proper assembly. As it was, the bishops had to deal with this new phase of spiritual life entirely on their own responsibility. They had no opportunity of consulting with their brethren on the bench, or even with the clergy in their dioceses; for not only was the voice of Convocation hushed, but diocesan synods and ruridecanal chapters had also fallen into abeyance. The want of such consultation is conspicuous in the doubt and perplexity which evidently distracted the minds both of the bishops and many of the clergy when they had to face the earlier phenomena of the Methodist movement.

It will thus be seen that there were many general causes at work which tended to debase the Church during the period which comes under our consideration. No doubt some that have been mentioned were symptoms as well as causes of the disease; but, in so far as they were causes, they must be fully taken into account before we condemn indiscriminately the clergy whose lot it was to live in an age when circumstances were so little conducive to the development of the higher spiritual life, or to the carrying out of the Church's proper mission to the nation. It is extremely difficult for any man to rise above the spirit of his age. He who can do so is a spiritual hero. But it is not given to everyone to reach the heroic standard; and it surely does not follow that because a man cannot be a hero he must therefore be a bad man.

Bearing these cautions in mind, we may now proceed to consider some of the more flagrant abuses, the existence of which has affixed a stigma, not altogether undeserved, upon the English Church of the eighteenth century.

One of the worst of these abuses—worst both in itself and also as the fruitful source of many others—was the glaring evil of pluralities and non-residence, an evil which was inherited from an earlier generation. It is perfectly astonishing to observe the lax views which even really good men seem to have held on this subject in the middle part of the century. Bishop Newton, the amiable and learned author of the 'Dissertation on the Prophecies,' mentions it as an act of almost Quixotic disinterestedness that 'when he obtained the deanery of St. Paul's (that is, in addition to his bishopric) he resigned his living in the City, having held it for twenty-five years.' In another passage he

plaintively enumerates the various preferments he had to resign on taking the bishopric of Bristol. 'He was obliged to give up the prebend of Westminster, the precentorship of York, the lectureship of St. George's, Hanover Square, and the genteel office of sub-almoner.' On another occasion we find him conjuring his friend Bishop Pearce, of Rochester, not to resign the deanery of Westminster. 'He offered and urged all the arguments he could to dissuade the Bishop from his purpose of separating the two preferments, which had been united for near a century, and lay so convenient to each other that neither of them would be of the same value without the other; and if once separated they might perhaps never be united again, and his successors would have reason to reproach and condemn his memory.' In another passage he complains of the diocese of Lincoln being 'so very large and laborious, so very extensive and expensive;' but the moral he draws is not that it should be subdivided, so that its bishop might be able to perform his duties, but 'that it really requires and deserves a good commendam to support it with any dignity.'

Herring held the deanery of Rochester in commendam with the bishopric of Bangor. Wilcocks was Bishop of Rochester and Dean of Westminster, and was succeeded both in the deanery and the bishopric by Zachary Pearce. Hoadly held the see of Bangor for six years, apparently without ever seeing the diocese in his life. Even the excellent Dr. Porteus (one of the most pious, liberal, and unselfish of men) thought it no sin to hold a country living in conjunction with the bishopric of Chester. He actually had permission to retain the important living of Lambeth as well; but 'he thought,' says his biographer with conscious pride, 'with so many additional cares he should not be able to attend to so large a benefice, at least to the satisfaction of his own mind, and therefore hesitated not a moment in giving it up into other hands.'[1] Bishop Watson, of Llandaff, gives a most artless account of his non-residence. 'Having,' he tells us, 'no place of residence in my diocese, I turned my attention to the improvement of land. I thought the improvement of a man's fortune by cultivating the earth was the most useful and honourable way of providing for a family. I have now been several years occupied as an improver of land and planter of trees.'[2]

[1] Hodgson's 'Life of Beilby Porteus, Bishop of London,' in vol. i. of Porteus's *Works*, p. 45. Another thoroughly good man, Bishop Gibson, was, before he was mitred, Precentor and Residentiary of Chichester, Rector of Lambeth, and Archdeacon of Surrey. See Coxe's *Memoirs of Sir R. Walpole*, i. 478.

[2] *Anecdotes of the Life of R. Watson, Bishop of Llandaff*, published by his Son, vol. i. p. 307.

The same bishop gives us a most extraordinary description of the sources from whence his clerical income was derived. 'The provision of 2,000*l*. a year,' he says, 'which I possess from the Church arises from the tithes of two churches in Shropshire, two in Leicestershire, two in my diocese, three in Huntingdonshire, on all of which I have resident curates ; of five more appropriations to the bishopric, and two more in the Isle of Ely as appropriations to the archdeaconry of Ely.' [1]

Pluralities and non-residence being thus so common among the very men whose special duty it was to prevent them, one can hardly wonder that the evil prevailed to a sad extent among the lower clergy.

Archbishop Secker, in his charge to the diocese of Canterbury in 1758, complains of 'the non-resident clergyman, who reckons it enough that, for aught he knows to the contrary, his parishioners go on like their neighbours,' and attributes to this, among other causes, 'the rise of a new sect, pretending to the strictest piety.' It seems, however, to have been taken for granted that the evil practice must be recognised to a certain extent. Thus Paley, in his charge in 1785, recommends 'the clergy who cannot talk to their parishioners, and non-resident incumbents, to distribute the tracts of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge ;' [2] and even so late as 1796 Bishop Horsley admits that 'many non-residents are promoting the general cause of Christianity, and perhaps doing better service than if they confined themselves to the ordinary labours of the ministry.' He thinks it would be 'no less impolitic than harsh to call such to residence,' and adds that 'other considerations make non-residence a thing to be connived at.' [3]

The collateral evils which would necessarily result from the scandals we are noticing are obvious. When the incumbent of a parish was non-resident, and more especially when, as was not unfrequently the case, there was not even a resident curate, it was impossible that the duties of the parish could be properly attended to. Evidences of this are only too plentiful. But, instead of quoting dreary details to prove a point which has been generally admitted, it will be sufficient in this place to refer to some passages in the charges of a worthy prelate which throw a curious light upon what such a one could reasonably look for in his clergy in the middle of the eighteenth century. In his charge to the diocese of Oxford, in 1741, Bishop Secker recommends the duty of catechising ; but he feels that his recommendation cannot

[1] Id. ii. 349.
[2] Paley's 'Charges,' vol. vii. of his *Works*, in 7 vols.
[3] 'Charge of the Bishop of Rochester,' 1796, Bishop Horsley's *Charges*.

in many cases be carried out. 'I am sensible,' he adds, 'that some clergymen are unhappily obliged to serve two churches the same afternoon.' We gather from the same charge a sad idea of the infrequency of the celebration of the Holy Communion. 'One thing,' the Bishop modestly suggests, 'might be done in all your parishes: a Sacrament might easily be interposed in that long interval between Whitsuntide and Christmas. If afterwards you can advance from a quarterly Communion to a monthly, I have no doubt you will.' In the same charge he reminds the clergy that 'our liturgy consists of evening as well as morning prayer, and no inconvenience can arise from attending it, provided persons are within tolerable distance of church. Few have business at that time of day, and amusement ought never to be preferred on the Lord's day before religion; not to say that there is room for both.'[1] When it is remembered that the state of things described in the above remarks existed in the great University diocese, which was presumably in advance rather than behind the age, and that, moreover, the clergy were presided over by a man who was thoroughly earnest and conscientious, and yet that he can only hint in the most delicate way at improvements which, as the tone of his exhortation evidently shows, he hardly hoped would be carried out, it may be imagined what was the condition of parishes in less favoured and more remote dioceses.

Another evil, which was greatly aggravated by the multiplication of benefices in a single hand, was clerical poverty. There was in the last century a far wider gap between the different classes of the clergy than there is at the present day. While the most eminent or most fortunate among them could take their places on a stand of perfect equality with the highest nobles in the land, the bulk of the country curates and poorer incumbents hardly rose above the rank of the small farmer. A much larger proportion than now lived and died without the slightest prospect of rising above the position of a stipendiary curate; and the regular stipend of a curate was 30*l.* a year. When Collins complained of the expense of maintaining so large a body of clergy, Bentley replied that 'the Parliamentary accounts showed that six thousand of the clergy had, at a middle rate, not 50*l.* a year;' and he then added that argument which was subsequently used with so much effect by Sydney Smith—viz. that 'talent is attracted into the Church by a few great prizes.'[2] Some years later, when Lord Shelburne asked Bishop Watson 'if nothing could be gotten from the Church towards alleviating the burdens of the State,'

[1] Bishop of Oxford's Second Charge, 1741, Secker's *Charges*.

[2] Remarks on a *Discourse of Freethinking, by Philelcutherus Lipsiensis*, xl. (edition of 1743).

the Bishop replied that the whole revenue of the Church would not yield 150*l.* a year to each clergyman, and therefore a diminution would be inexpedient unless Government would be contented to have a beggarly and illiterate clergy, which no wise minister would wish.'[1] He might have added that, even as it was, a great number of the clergy, if not 'beggarly and illiterate,' were either weighed down with the pressure of poverty, or, to escape it, were obliged to have recourse to occupations which were more fit for illiterate men. Dr. Primrose, in his adversity, and Parson Adams are specimens of the better type of this class of clergy, and it is to be feared that Parson Trulliber is not a very unfair specimen of the worst. There is an odd illustration of the immeasurable distance which was supposed to separate the bishop from the curate in Cradock's 'Reminiscences.' Bishop Warburton was to preach in St. Lawrence's Church in behalf of the London Hospital. 'I was,' writes Cradock, 'introduced into the vestry by a friend, where the Lord Mayor and others were waiting for the Duke of York, who was their president; and in the meantime the bishop did everything in his power to entertain and alleviate their patience. He was beyond measure condescending and courteous, and even graciously handed some biscuits and wine in a salver to the curate who was to read prayers!'[2]

So far as one can judge, this wide gulf which divided the higher from the lower clergy was by no means always a fair measure of their respective merits. The readers of 'Joseph Andrews' will remember that Parson Adams is represented not only as a pious and estimable clergyman, but also as a scholar and a divine. And there were not wanting in real life unbeneficed clergymen who, in point of abilities and erudition, might have held their own with the learned prelates of the period. Thomas Stackhouse, the curate of Finchley, is a remarkable case in point. His 'Compleat Body of Divinity,' and, still more, his 'History of the Bible,' published in 1733, are worthy to stand on the same shelf with the best writings of the bishops in an age when the Bench was extraordinarily fertile in learning and intellectual activity. John Newton wrote most of his works in a country curacy. Romaine, whose learning and abilities none can doubt, was fifty years old before he was beneficed. Seed, a preacher and writer of note, was a curate for the greater part of his life. It must be added, however, that as the eighteenth century

[1] *Anecdotes of the Life of R. Watson, Bishop of Llandaff*, i. 159.

[2] Quoted in Kilvert's *Life of Bishop Hurd*, p. 97. Dean Swift, in his *Project for the Advancement of Religion*, speaks of curates in the most contemptuous terms. 'In London, a clergyman, *with one or two sorry curates*, has sometimes the care of above 20,000 souls incumbent on him.'

advanced, a very decided improvement took place in the circumstances of the bulk of the clergy—an improvement which would have been still more extensive but for the prevalence of pluralities.

Unhappily, among the evils resulting from the multiplication of a needy clergy, which may be in part attributed to the undue accumulation of Church property in a few hands, mere penury was not the worst. Some clergy struggled manfully and honestly against its pressure, but others fell into disreputable courses These latter are not, of course, to be regarded as representative men of any class in the Church. They were simply the Pariahs of ecclesiastical society ; the black sheep which will be found, in one form or another, in every age of the Church. But owing to the causes noted above, they formed an exceptionally large class at the close of the seventeenth and during the first half at least of the eighteenth century.

Some belonging to this class of clergy supported themselves as hangers-on to the families of the great. Domestic chaplains in great houses became less common as the century advanced. The admirable hits of Addison and Steele against the indignities to which domestic chaplains were subjected are more applicable to the early than to the latter part of the century. Boswell adduced it as an instance that 'there was less religion in the nation than formerly,' that 'there used to be a chaplain in every great family, which we do not find now;' and was well answered by Dr. Johnson, 'Neither do you find any of the state servants in great families. There is a change in customs.' The change, however, was not wholly to the advantage of the Church. Bad as was the relation between the chaplain and his patron, where the former was degraded to an inferior position in the household, there was still some sort of spiritual tie between them.[1] The parson who was simply the boon companion of the ignorant and sensual squire of the Hanoverian period was in a still worse position. This class of clergyman is a constant subject of satire in the lighter literature and caricatures of the day. Not that they were so numerous or so bad as they are often represented to have been. There was a strong and growing tendency in the Georgian era to make the very worst of clerical delinquencies. For it is a curious fact that while the Church as an establishment was most popular, her ministers were most unpopular. Secker complained, not without reason, in 1738, that 'Christianity is now railed at and ridiculed with very little reserve, and the

[1] How nobly and successfully a domestic chaplain in a great family might do his duty in the eighteenth century, the conduct of Thomas Wilson, when he was domestic chaplain to the Earl of Derby, and tutor to his son, is an instance.

teachers of it without any at all. Against us our adversaries appear to have set themselves to be as bitter as they can—not only beyond all truth, but beyond probability—exaggerating without mercy,' &c.[1] And nearly thirty years later he still makes the same complaint. 'You cannot but see,' he warns candidates for Holy Orders, 'in what a profane and corrupt age this stewardship is committed to you; how grievously religion and its ministers are hated and despised.'[2] 'Since the Lollards,' writes Mr. Pattison, 'there had never been a time when the ministers of religion were held in so much contempt as in the Hanoverian period, or when satire upon Churchmen was so congenial to the general feeling. There was no feeling against the Establishment, nor was Nonconformity ever less in favour. The contempt was for the persons, manners, and characters of ecclesiastics.'[3] This unpopularity arose from a complication of causes which need not be investigated in this place; it is sufficient to notice the fact, which should be thoroughly borne in mind in estimating the value to be attached to contemporary complaints of clerical misdoings.

The evils resulting from pluralities and non-residence would have been mischievous under any circumstances; but their mischief was still further enhanced by the false principles upon which ecclesiastical patronage was too often distributed. Statesmen who valued religion chiefly as a State engine had an eye merely to political ends in the distribution of Church preferment. This is of course a danger to which an Established Church is peculiarly liable at all times; but the critical circumstances of the eighteenth century rendered the temptation of using the Church simply for State purposes especially strong. The memorable results of the Sacheverell impeachment, which contributed so largely to bring about the downfall of the Whig Ministry in 1710, showed how dangerous it was for statesmen to set themselves against the strong feeling of the majority of the clergy. The lifelong effects which this famous trial produced upon Sir R. Walpole have already been noticed. Both he and his timid successor prided themselves upon being friends of the Church, and expected the Church to be friends to them in return. Neither of them made any secret of the fact that they regarded Church preferment as a useful means of strengthening their own power. Nor were these isolated cases. 'Lord Hardwicke' (his biographer tells us) 'thought it his duty to dispose of the ecclesiastical preferments in his gift [as Chancellor] with a view to increase his own political influence, without any scrupulous regard for the

[1] Bishop of Oxford's *Charge*, 1738.
[2] Secker's *Instructions given to Candidates for Orders*.
[3] Mr. Pattison's Essay in *Essays and Reviews*.

interests of religion, and without the slightest respect for scientific or literary merit.'[1] Lord Shelburne gave the bishopric of Llandaff to Dr. Watson, 'hoping,' the Bishop tells us, 'I was a warm, and might become a useful partisan; and he told the Duke of Grafton he hoped I might occasionally write a pamphlet for their administration.'[2] Warburton complains with characteristic roughness of 'the Church being bestrid by some lumpish minister.'[3] Even Dr. Johnson, that stout defender of the Established Church, and of everything connected with the administration of its affairs, was obliged to own that 'no man can now be made a bishop for his learning and piety; his only chance of promotion is his being connected with some one who has parliamentary interest.'[4] He seems, however, to think the system inevitable and justifiable, owing to the weakness of the Government, for he prefaces his admission by remarking that 'all that Government, which has now too little power, has to bestow, must be given to support itself; it cannot reward merit.' Mr. Grenville's well-known remark to Bishop Newton,[5] that he considered bishoprics of two sorts, either as bishoprics of business or bishoprics of ease, is another instance of the low views which statesmen took, and were not ashamed to avow, of their responsibilities as dispensers of Church preferment.

Such a system naturally tended to foster a false estimate of their duties on the part of those who were promoted. If the dispenser of Church preferment was too apt to regard merely political ends, the recipient or expectant was on his part too often ready to play the courtier or to become the mere political partisan. Whiston complains that 'the bishops of his day were too well known to be tools of the Court to merit better bishoprics by voting as directed.'[6] Warburton owns that 'the general body of the clergy have been and (he is afraid) always will be very intent upon pushing their temporal fortunes.'[7] Watson considered 'the

[1] *Lives of the Chancellors*, by Lord Campbell, vol. v. chap. xxxviii. p. 186.

[2] *Anecdotes of the Life of R. Watson, Bishop of Llandaff*, published by his Son, vol. i. p. 157.

[3] *Letters from Warburton to Hurd*, second ed. 1809, Letter xlvii. July 1752.

[4] Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, in ten vols., 1835, Murray, vol. v. p. 298. See also vol. iv. p. 92. 'Few bishops are now made for their learning. To be a bishop a man must be learned in a learned age, factious in a factious age, but always of eminence,' &c.

[5] See Bishop Newton's *Autobiography*, and Lord Mahon's *History*.

[6] *Memoirs of William Whiston*, by himself, p. 275. See also pp. 119 and 155, 156.

[7] 'A fact,' he adds, 'so apparent to Government, both civil and ecclesi-

acquisition of a bishopric as no proof of personal merit, inasmuch as they are often given to the flattering dependants and unlearned younger branches of noble families.' Nay, further, he considered 'the possession of a bishopric as a frequent occasion of personal demerit.' 'For,' he writes, 'I saw the generality of bishops bartering their independence and dignity of their order for the chance of a translation, and polluting Gospel humility by the pride of prelacy.'[1] Lord Campbell informs us that 'in spite of Lord Thurlow's living openly with a mistress, his house was not only frequented by his brother the bishop, but by ecclesiastics of all degrees, who celebrated the orthodoxy of the head of the law and his love of the Established Church.'[2] If one might trust two memoir writers who had better opportunities of acquiring correct information than almost any of their contemporaries, inasmuch as one was the son of the all-powerful minister, and the other was the intimate friend and confidential adviser of the chief dispenser of ecclesiastical patronage, the sycophancy and worldliness of the clergy about the Court in the middle of the eighteenth century must have been flagrant indeed. The writers referred to are, of course, Horace Walpole and John, Lord Hervey. Both of them, however, are so evidently actuated by a bitter animus against the Church that their statements can by no means be relied upon as authentic history.

Let us take another kind of evidence. Several of the Church dignitaries of the eighteenth century have been obliging enough to leave autobiographies to posterity, so that we can judge of their characters as drawn, not by the prejudiced or imperfect information of others, but by those who ought to know them best —themselves. One of the most popular of these autobiographies is that of Bishop Newton. A great part of his amusing memoirs is taken up with descriptions of the methods which he and his

astical, that they have found it necessary to provide rewards and honours for such advances in learning and piety as may best enable the clergy to serve the interests of the Church of Christ,' a remark which we might have thought ironical did we not know the temper of the times.—See Watson's *Life of Warburton*, 488.

[1] *Anecdotes of the Life of Bishop Watson*, i. 116. He quotes also a remark of D'Alembert: 'The highest offices in Church and State resemble a pyramid, whose top is accessible to only two sorts of animals, eagles and reptiles.'

[2] *Lives of the Chancellors*, vol. v. chap. clxi. p. 656. Lord Chesterfield makes some bitter remarks on the higher clergy 'with the most indefatigable industry and insatiable greediness, darkening in clouds the levees of kings and ministers,' &c., quoted in Phillimore's *History of England*, during the reign of George III. Phillimore himself makes some very severe strictures on the sycophancy and greed of the higher clergy.—See his *History, passim*.

friends adopted to secure preferment. There is very little, if anything, in them of the duties and responsibilities of the episcopal office. Where will they be most comfortable? What are their chances of further preferment? How shall they best please the Court and the ministers in office? These are the questions which Bishop Newton and his brother prelates, to whom he makes frequent but never ill-natured allusions, are represented as constantly asking in effect. Curious indeed are the glimpses which the Bishop gives us into the system of Church patronage and the race for preferment which were prevalent in his day. But more curious still is the impression which the memoirs convey that the writer himself had not the faintest conception that there was anything in the least degree unseemly in what he relates. There appears to be a sort of moral obtuseness in him in reference to these subjects, but to these subjects only.[1] The memoir closes with a beautiful expression of resignation to the Divine will, and of hopeful confidence about the future, in which he was no doubt perfectly sincere. And yet he openly avows a laxity of principle in the matter of preferment-seeking and Court-subservience which taken by itself would argue a very worldly mind. How are we to reconcile the apparent discrepancy? The most charitable as well as the most reasonable explanation is that the good Bishop's faults were simply the faults of his age and of his class. And for this very reason the autobiography is all the more valuable as an illustration of the subject before us. Bishop Newton is eminently a representative man. His memoir contains evidently not the exceptional sentiments of one who was either in advance of or behind his age, but reflects a faithful picture of a general attitude of mind very prevalent among Church dignitaries of that date.

Bishop Watson's 'Anecdotes of his own Life' furnish another curious illustration of the sentiments of the age on the matter of Church preferment. But the Bishop of Llandaff treats the matter from an entirely different point of view from that of the Bishop of Bristol. The latter was perfectly content with his own position, and with the preferment before him of his brother clergy. 'He was rather pleased with his little bishopric.' 'His income was amply sufficient, and scarce any bishop had two more comfortable or convenient houses. Greater he might have been, but he could not have been happier; and by the good blessing of God was enabled to make a competent provision for those who were to come after him, as well as to bestow some-

[1] The Life gives us the impression that he was a firm believer, that he strove to live a Christian life, that he was very amiable, and that he was quite free from the paltry vice of jealousy at another's good fortune.

thing on charity.'[1] Bishop Watson writes in a very different strain. His 'Anecdotes' are full of the bitterest complaints of the neglect he had met with. He is 'abandoned by his friends, and proscribed the emoluments of his profession.' He is 'exhibited to the world as a marked man fallen under royal displeasure.' He appeals to posterity in the most pathetic terms. 'Reader!' he exclaims, 'when this meets your eye, the author of it will be rotting in his grave, insensible alike to censure and to praise; but he begs to be forgiven this apparently self-commendation. It has not sprung from vanity, but from anxiety for his reputation, lest the disfavour of a Court should by some be considered as an indication of general disesteem or a proof of professional demerit.' And yet, by his own confession, Bishop Watson had a clerical income from his bishopric and professorship of divinity at Cambridge of 2,000*l.* a year; in return for which, the work he did in either of these capacities was, from his own showing, really next to nothing. In fact, in many respects he seems to have been an exceptionally lucky man. He was appointed to two professorships at Cambridge when by his own admission he was totally unqualified for performing the duties of either. In 1764, when he was only twenty-seven years of age, he 'was unanimously elected, by the Senate assembled in full congregation, Professor of Chemistry.' 'At the time this honour was conferred upon me,' he tells us with charming frankness, 'I knew nothing at all of chemistry, had never read a syllable on the subject, nor seen a single experiment in it; but I was tired with mathematics and natural philosophy, and the *vehementissima gloriæ cupido* stimulated me to try my strength in a new pursuit, and the kindness of the University (it was always kind to me) animated me to very extraordinary exertions.' A few years later the University was kinder still. At the early age of thirty-four he was appointed 'to the first office for honour in the University, the Regius Professorship of Divinity.' Then with the same delightful naïveté he tells us, 'On being raised to this distinguished office I immediately applied myself with great eagerness to the study of divinity.' One would have thought that his theological studies should have commenced before he undertook the duties of a divinity professorship. But, happily for him, his ideas of what would qualify him to be a theologian were on the most limited scale. 'I determined to study nothing but my Bible, being much unconcerned about the opinions of councils, fathers, churches, bishops, and other men as little inspired as myself.' If troublesome people wanted to argue on theological questions with the

[1] *Memoirs of Bishop Newton*, by himself.

Regius Professor of Divinity, 'I never,' he tells us, 'troubled myself with answering their arguments, but used on such occasions to say to them, holding the New Testament in my hand, "*En sacrum codicem.*"' This was a simple plan, and it must be confessed, under the circumstances, a very convenient and prudent one, but it scarcely justified the strong claims for preferment which the Bishop constantly founded upon it, as if he had rendered an almost priceless service to religion. The compendious method of silencing a gainsayer or satisfying an anxious inquirer by flourishing a New Testament in his face, and crying '*En sacrum codicem*,' seems hardly likely to have been very effective. For the first few years of his professorship he attended to its duties personally, after the fashion that has been described; but for the greater part of the long time during which he held that office he employed a deputy. When he was appointed to the bishopric of Llandaff he found there was no residence for him in his diocese, and he does not seem to have particularly cared about having one. He was content with paying it an occasional visit at very rare intervals, and settled himself in comfortable quarters 'in the beautiful district on the banks of Winandermere.' Here he employed his time 'not,' he proudly tells us, 'in field diversions and visiting. No! it has been spent partly in supporting the religion and constitutions of my country, by seasonable publications, and principally in building farmhouses, blasting rocks, enclosing wastes, making bad land good, planting larches, &c. By such occupations I have recovered my health, preserved my independence, set an example of a spirited husbandry, and honourably provided for my family.'

If we formed our estimate of Bishop Watson's character simply from such samples as these, we might conclude that he was a covetous, unreasonably discontented, and worldly-minded man. But this would be a very unfair conclusion to arrive at. The Bishop gives us only one, and that the weakest side of his character. He was most highly esteemed by some of his contemporaries, whose good opinion was well worth having. Gibbon pays him a very high compliment, calling him 'his most candid as well as able antagonist.' Wilberforce wrote to him in 1800 saying that 'he hoped ere now to be able to congratulate him on a change of situation which in public justice ought to have taken place.' In 1797, Hayley wrote to him (saying it was Lord Thurlow's expression), 'Your writings have done more for Christianity than all the bench of bishops put together.'[1] Lord Campden

[1] Bishop Watson was a decidedly able writer, and he never allowed himself to be the tool of any party. He says of himself with perfect truth, 'I have hitherto followed and shall continue to follow my own judgment in all public transactions.'

told Pitt that 'it was a shame for him and the Church that he had not the most exalted station upon the Bench.' As in the case of Bishop Newton, one can only reconcile these anomalies by bearing fully in mind the low views which were commonly taken of clerical responsibilities, and the general scramble for the emoluments of the Church which was not thought unseemly in the eighteenth century.

One of the most characteristic specimens of the courtier prelate of the eighteenth century on whom so much abuse has been somewhat unfairly lavished both by contemporaries and by writers of our own time, who have dwelt exclusively upon the weak side of their character, was Bishop Hurd. Hurd is now chiefly known as the devoted friend—or rather the '*fidus Achates*'—of Warburton. He was a man, however, who had a very distinct individuality of his own, and may be regarded as a fair representative of a type of bishop now extinct. He was distinguished as a scholar, a divine, and a courtier. When, however, it is said that Hurd was a courtier, it is not meant to imply that he was servile or in any way unduly complaisant to the King or the Court. There is no evidence of anything of the sort. Neither does he appear to have been, like some of his contemporaries, unduly intent upon advancing his own selfish interests. His preferments came apparently unsought, and he refused the Primacy, although it was pressed upon him by the King on the death of Archbishop Cornwallis in 1783. Although he rose from a comparatively humble origin, 'his parents,' he tells us, 'were plain, honest, and good people' (his father was, in fact, a farmer); he seems to have been gifted by nature with great courtliness of manner, and with aristocratic tastes. On his first introduction at Court he won by these graces the heart of the King, who remarked that he thought him more naturally polite than any man he had ever met with. Hurd subsequently became the most trusted friend and constant adviser of George III. There is a very touching letter extant, which the King wrote to Hurd in one of his great sorrows, expressing most feelingly the value in which George held the religious ministrations of his favourite bishop, and the high opinion he had of his piety and worth. The mere fact that Hurd won the affectionate respect—one might almost say veneration—of so good a Christian as King George, furnishes a presumption that he must have been a man of some merit; and there is nothing whatever in any of his writings, or in anything we hear of his life, that should lead us to think otherwise. Nevertheless, it was just such men as Hurd who tended to keep the Church of the eighteenth century in its apathetic state. Hurd was a religious-minded man; but his

religion was characterised by a cold, prim propriety which was not calculated to commend it to men at large. Like his friend Warburton, he could see nothing but folly and fanatical madness in the great evangelical revival which was going on around him, and which he seems to have thought would soon be stamped out. He only emerged from his stately seclusion on great occasions; but when he did go forth, he was surrounded with all 'the pomp and circumstance' which might impress beholders with a sense of his dignity. 'Hartlebury Church is not above a quarter of a mile from Hartlebury Castle, and yet that quarter of a mile Hurd always travelled in his episcopal coach, with his servants in full-dress liveries; and when he used to go from Worcester to Bristol Hot Wells, he never moved without a train of twelve servants.' Hurd has left us a very short memoir of his own life; but short as the memoir is, it gives us a curious insight into one side of his character. The whole account is compressed into twenty-six pages, and consists for the most part merely of a bare recital of the chief events of his life. But one day—one memorable day to be marked with the whitest of white chalk—is described at full length. Out of the twenty-six pages, no less than six are devoted to the description of a visit with which the King honoured him at Hartlebury, when 'no accident,' we are glad to learn, 'of any kind interrupted the mutual satisfaction which was given and received on the occasion.'

It has been already observed that the Church interest formed a most important element in the reckoning of statesmen of this century; and the extent to which the clergy were mixed up with the politics of the day must, under the circumstances, be reckoned among the Church abuses of the period. Not, of course, that this is in itself an evil. On the contrary, it would be distinctly a misfortune, both to the State and to the Church, if the clergy of a Church constituted like our own were to abstain altogether from taking any part in politics. It could hardly fail to be a loss to the State if a large and presumably intelligent class stood entirely aloof from its affairs. And the clergy themselves by so doing would be both forfeiting a right and neglecting a duty. As citizens who have an equal stake with the laity in the interests of the country, they clearly enjoy the right to have a voice in the conduct of its affairs. And as Christians they have a positive duty incumbent upon them to use the influence they possess in this, as in every other relation of life, for the cause of Christianity. But with this right and this duty there is also a danger lest those, whose chief concern ought to be with higher objects, should become overmuch entangled with the affairs of this life; and a danger also lest men whose training is, as a rule, not

adapted to make them good men of business, should throw their influence into the wrong scale. In so far, but only in so far as the clergy fell into one or the other of these snares, can the political Churchmanship of the eighteenth century be classed among the Church abuses of the period. The circumstances of the times increased these dangers. During the reigns of the first two Georges political morality was at so low an ebb that it was difficult for the clergy to take a leading part in politics without injury to their spiritual character. They could hardly touch the pitch without being defiled. It is to be feared that politics at this period did more to debase the clergy than the clergy did to elevate politics. Not but that they often incurred an unpopularity for the part they took in political questions which was wholly undeserved. Nothing, for example, brought more odium upon the bishops than the share they had in throwing out the Quakers' Tithes Bill in 1736. Yet apparently without just cause ; for a high legal authority of our own day, who certainly shows no prejudice in favour of the Church and her ministers, characterises this measure as a well-meant but impracticable Bill. Again, in 1753, many of the bishops were exposed to unmerited abuse for supporting, as they were clearly right in doing, the Jews' Naturalisation Bill. Again, in 1780, the bishops had the good sense not to be led astray by the senseless 'No Popery' cry which led to the Gordon riots ; and by their moral courage on this occasion they drew down upon themselves much undeserved censure. The good sense, however, which characterised the political conduct of the clergy on these and other occasions was, unfortunately, exceptional. As a rule, the political influence of the clergy was not very wisely exercised.

In his summary of the period which closed with the death of George II., Horace Walpole writes :—'The Church was moderate and, when the Ministry required it, yielding.' From the point of view of this writer, whose sentiments on religious matters exactly corresponded with those of his father, nothing could have been more satisfactory than this state of things. To those who look upon the Church merely as a State Establishment, 'moderate, and, when the Ministry require it, yielding,' would represent its ideal condition. But to those who believe in it as a Divine institution, the picture will convey a different impression. They will see in it a worldly man's description of the spiritual lethargy which had overtaken English Christendom. The expression will not be deemed too strong when it is remembered what was, as a matter of fact, the real state of affairs so far as the practical work of the Church was concerned. Under the very different conditions amidst which we live, it is difficult to realise what existed, or

rather what did not exist, in the last century. What would now be considered the most ordinary part of parochial machinery was then wanting. The Sunday school, which was first set on foot about the middle of this century,[1] was regarded with suspicion by many of the clergy, and vehemently opposed by some. The interest in foreign missions which had been awakened at the beginning of the century was not sustained. The population of the country had far outgrown the resources of the National Church, even if her ministers had been as energetic as they were generally the reverse; and there were no voluntary societies for home missions to supply the defects of the parochial machinery. The good old plan of catechising not only children but domestic servants and apprentices on Sunday afternoons had fallen into disuse.[2] In the early part of the century plans had been set on foot for the establishment of parochial libraries, but these had fallen through. In short, beyond the personal influence which a clergyman might exercise over his friends and dependants in his parish (which was often very wholesome and also very extensive), his clerical work consisted solely in reading the services and preaching on Sundays. When Boswell talked of the assiduity of the Scottish clergy in visiting and privately instructing their parishioners, and observed how much in this they excelled the English clergy, Johnson, who would never hear one word against that Church of which he was a worthy member and a distinguished ornament, could only reply, 'There are different ways of instructing. Our clergy pray and preach. The clergy of England have

[1] Raikes established the first of his Sunday schools in 1781, but it is certain that one was established before this by Hannah Ball at High Wycombe in 1769; and it is probable that there were also others. Mr. Buckle says they were established by Lindsay in or immediately after 1765. (*History of Civilisation*, i. 302, note.) However, to Raikes belongs the credit of bringing the institution prominently before the public. It may be noticed that Raikes was a decided Churchman. His son contradicts almost indignantly the notion which became prevalent that he was a Dissenter. One of the rules of Raikes's Gloucester Sunday school was that the scholars should attend the cathedral service. There was a strong prejudice against Sunday schools among some of the clergy, but it was combated by others. Paley, in one of his charges, tried to disabuse his clergy of this prejudice, and so did several other dignitaries. But Bishop Horsley, in his charge at Rochester, made some severe remarks against Sunday schools. See *Life of R. Hill*, p. 428. The evangelical clergy, of course, warmly took up the Sunday school scheme. In this, as in many other cases, the Church was responsible for the remedy as well as the abuse.

[2] Bishop Wilson made vigorous and successful efforts in the Isle of Man to revive the system of catechising in church; and strongly urged every 'rector, vicar, and curate to spend, if but one hour in every week, in visiting his petty school, and see how the children are taught to read, to say their catechism and their prayers,' &c.

produced the most valuable books in support of religion, both in theory and practice.' The praise contained in this last sentence was thoroughly deserved. The clergy, if inactive in other respects, were not inactive with their pens; only of course the work done in this direction was done by a very small minority.

But they all preached. What was the character of their sermons?

On this point, as on many others, the censure that has been passed upon the Church of the eighteenth century has been far too sweeping and far too severe. When one hears the sermons of the period stigmatised without any qualification as 'miserable moral essays,' and 'as unspeakably and indescribably bad,' one calls to mind almost indignantly the great preachers of the time, whose sermons have been handed down to us and may be referred to by anyone who chooses to do so. Surely this is not a proper description of the sermons of such men as Sherlock, Smalridge, Waterland, Seed, Ogden, Atterbury, Mudge, Hare, Bentley, and last but not least, Butler himself, whose practical sermons might be preached with advantage before a village congregation at this day. Too much stress has been laid upon a somewhat random observation of Sir William Blackstone, who 'had the curiosity, early in the reign of George III., to go from church to church and hear every clergyman of note in London. He says that he did not hear a single discourse which had more Christianity in it than the writings of Cicero, and that it would have been impossible for him to discover, from what he heard, whether the preacher were a follower of Confucius, of Mahomet, or of Christ.' The famous lawyer does not specify the churches which he visited. He may have been unfortunate in his choice, or he may have been in a frame of mind which was not conducive to an unbiassed judgment;[1] but we have the best of all means of testing how far his sweeping censure may be fairly taken as applicable to the general character of the sermons of the day. The most celebrated of them are still in existence, and will give their own contradiction to the charge. It is not true that the preachers of this period entirely ignored the distinctive doctrines of Christianity; it would be more correct to say that they took the knowledge of them too much for granted—that they were as

[1] Blackstone, though endowed with many excellent qualities, is said to have had a somewhat irritable temper, which, as he advanced in years, was rendered worse by a nervous affection. Bentham says 'that he seems to have had something about him which rendered breaches with him not difficult.' Lawyers are so accustomed to criticise arguments that they are apt to be somewhat severe judges of sermons. How many clergymen of the present day would like to have their sermons judged by the standard of a great lawyer of a somewhat irritable temperament?

a rule too controversial, and that they too often appealed to merely prudential motives. Even Dr. Johnson, who set a very high value upon the sermons of his Church, and declared on one occasion that 'sermons make a considerable branch of English literature, so that a library must be very imperfect if it has not a numerous collection of sermons,' yet confessed that they did not effect the good they ought to do. A sensitive dread of anything like enthusiasm was a marked characteristic of the eighteenth century: this dread did not originate with the clergy, but it was taken up by them and reflected in their sermons. This, of course, was at first greatly intensified by the excitement raised by the Methodist movement, although it was afterwards dispelled by the same cause. The orthodox preacher of the Hanoverian period felt bound to protest against the superstitions of Rome on the one hand and the fanaticism of sectaries on the other; in contrast with both of whom the moderation of 'our happy Establishment' was extolled to the skies. To such a morbid extent was his dread of extremes carried, so carefully had he to guard himself against being supposed to diverge one hair's breadth from the middle course taken up by the Church of England, that in his fear of being over-zealous he became over-tame and colourless. Tillotson was his model, and, like most imitators, he exaggerated the defects of his master. So far as it is possible to group under one head so vast and varied an amount of composition, produced by men of the most diverse casts of mind, and extending over so long a period as a hundred years, one may perhaps fairly characterise the typical eighteenth century sermon as too stiff and formal, too cold and artificial, appealing more to the reason than to the feelings, and so more calculated to convince the understanding than to affect the heart. 'We have no sermons,' said Dr. Johnson, 'addressed to the passions that are good for anything.'

These defects were brought out into stronger relief by their contrast to the very different style of preaching adopted by the revived Evangelical school. And the success of this latter school called the attention of some of the most thoughtful divines to the deficiencies of the ordinary style of preaching, which they fully admitted and unsparingly but judiciously exposed. Thus Archbishop Secker, in his Charge to the Diocese of Canterbury in 1758, in speaking of the 'new sect pretending to the strictest piety,' wisely urges his clergy 'to emulate what is good in them, avoiding what is bad, to edify their parishioners with awakening but rational and Scriptural discourses, to teach the principles not only of virtue and natural religion, but of the Gospel, not as almost refined away by the modern refiner, but the truth as it is

in Jesus and as it is taught by the Church.' Still stronger are the censures passed in later years upon the lack in the sermons of the day of evangelical doctrines, by men who were very far from identifying themselves with the Evangelical school. Thus Paley, in his seventh charge,[1] comments upon this point. And Bishop Horsley, in his first Charge to the Diocese of St. David's in 1709, stigmatises the unchristian method of preaching in that dignified but incisive language of which he was a consummate master.

If, on the one hand, a somewhat heartless and vague method of dealing with the great distinctive doctrines of Christianity, and especially the practical application of them, may fairly be reckoned among Church abuses, there was, on the other hand, an abuse of sermons which arose from an excess of zeal. There were occasions on which the preacher could make strong enough appeals to the passions ; but, unfortunately, the subjects were not those which fall primarily within the province of the pulpit. But here again, as on so many other points, the abuse arose rather from the circumstances of the time than from the faults of the men. The proper province of the preacher was not clearly defined. The eighteenth century was a transition period in regard to the relation between politics and the pulpit. The lately emancipated press was beginning to make itself felt as a great power in the country ; periodical literature was by degrees taking the place which in earlier times had been less fitly occupied by the pulpit for the ventilation of political questions. The bad old custom of 'tuning the pulpits' had died out ; but political preaching could not be quickly or easily put a stop to.

In ranking political sermons among the Church abuses of the eighteenth century, it is by no means intended to imply that the preacher ought under all circumstances to abstain from touching upon politics. There are occasions when it is his bounden duty as a Christian champion to advocate Christian measures and to protest against unchristian ones; the danger is lest he should forget the Christian advocate in the political partisan; and it is only in so far as the political preachers of the eighteenth century fell into this snare (as at times they unquestionably did) that their sermons can be classed among the Church abuses of the period.

In treating of Church abuses, a question naturally arises which deserves and requires serious consideration. How far were these abuses responsible for the low state of morals and religion into which the nation sank during the reigns of the first two Georges ? That lax morality and religious indifference pre-

[1] See vol. vii. 'Charge VII.' in Paley's *Works* in seven vols.

vailed more or less among all classes of society during this period, we learn from the concurrent testimony of writers of every kind and creed. Turn where one will, the same melancholy picture is presented to us If we ask what was the state of the Universities, which ought to be the centres of light diffusing itself throughout the whole nation, the training-grounds of those who are to be the trainers of their fellow-men, we have the evidence of such different kinds of men as Swift, Defoe, Gray, Gibbon, Johnson, John Wesley, Lord Eldon, and Lord Chesterfield all agreeing on this point, that both the great Universities were neglectful and inefficient in the performance of their proper work. If we ask what was the state of the highest classes, we find that there were sovereigns on the throne whose immorality rivalled that of the worst of the Stuarts without any of their redeeming qualities, without any of the grace and elegance and taste for literature and the fine arts which to a certain extent palliated the vices of that unfortunate race; we find political morality at its lowest ebb; we find courtiers and statesmen living in open defiance of the laws of morality; we find luxury without taste, and profligacy without refinement predominant among the highest circles. If we ask what was the state of the lower classes, we find such notices as these in a contemporary historian: '1729–30. Luxury created necessities, and these drove the lower ranks into the most abandoned wickedness. It was unsafe to travel or walk in the streets.' '1731. Profligacy among the people continued to an amazing degree.'[1] These extracts, taken almost at haphazard from the pages of a contemporary, are confirmed by abundance of testimony from all quarters. The middle classes were confessedly better than those either above or below them.[2] Nevertheless, there are not wanting indications that the standard of morality was not high among them. For example, it is the middle class rather than those above or below them who set the fashion of popular amusements. What, then, was the character of the amusements of the period? The stage, if it was a little improved since the wild days of the Restoration, was yet so bad that even a lax moralist like Lord Hervey was obliged to own in 1737, 'The present great licentiousness of the stage did call for

[1] Similar complaints are uttered regarding 1737–8–9. H. Walpole writes of 1751: 'The vices of the lower people were increased to a degree of robbery and murder beyond example.'—*Memoirs of the Reign of King George II.*, vol. i. chap. ii. p. 44.

[2] *E.g.* Archbishop Wake, in his letter to Courayer in 1726, writes: 'Iniquity in practice, God knows, abounds, chiefly in the two extremes, the highest and the lowest. The middle sort are serious and religious.' See also *Robinson Crusoe*, chap. i.

some restraint and regulation.'[1] Such brutal pastimes as cock-fighting and bull-baiting were everywhere popular. Drunkenness was then, as now, a national vice, but it was less disreputable among the middle classes than it happily is at present.[2] What was the state of literature? Notwithstanding the improvement which such writers as Addison and Steele had effected, it was still very impure. Let us take the evidence of the kindly and well-informed Sir Walter Scott. 'We should do great injustice to the present day by comparing our manners with those of the reign of George I. The writings even of the most esteemed poets of that period contain passages which now would be accounted to deserve the pillory. Nor was the tone of conversation more pure than that of composition; for the taint of Charles II.'s reign continued to infect society until the present reign [George III.], when, if not more moral, we are at least more decent.'[3] What was the state of the law? The criminal law was simply barbarous. Any theft of more than 40*s.* was punishable by death. Objects of horror, such as the heads of the rebel chiefs fixed on Temple Bar in 1746, were exposed in the vain hope that they might act as a 'terriculum.'[4] Prisons teemed with cruel abuses. The Roman Catholics were still suffering most unjustly, and if the laws had been rigorously enforced they would have suffered more cruelly still. A more tolerant spirit was happily gaining ground in the hearts of the nation, but so far as the laws were concerned there were few if any traces of it. The Act of 1779, for the relief of Dissenters, is affirmed to be 'the first statute in the direction of enlarged toleration which had been passed for ninety years.'[5] It was about the middle of the century when irreligion and immorality reached their climax. In 1753, Sir J. Barnard said publicly, 'At present it really seems to be the fashion for a man to declare himself of no religion.'[6] In the same year Secker declared that immorality and irreligion were grown almost beyond ecclesiastical power.

The question, then, arises, 'How far were the clergy responsible for this sad state of affairs?' As a body they were distinctly superior to their contemporaries. It is a remarkable fact that when the clergy were, as a rule, very unpopular, during the

[1] Lord Hervey's *Memoirs*, ii. 341, in reference to the Bill to put all players under the direction of the Lord Chamberlain.

[2] See, *inter alia*, the description of a small squire of the reign of George II. in Grose's *Olio*, 1792.

[3] Quoted in Andrews, 18th century.

[4] See chap. lxx. of Lord Mahon's *History*.

[5] Skeats's *History of the Free Churches of England*, p. 465.

[6] *Parliamentary History*, vol. xiv. p. 1389.

reign of the Georges I. and II.,[1] and when, therefore, any evil reports against them would be eagerly caught up and circulated, we find singularly few charges of gross immorality brought against them. Excessive love of preferment, and culpable inactivity in performing the duties of their office, are the worst accusations that are brought against them as a body. Even men like Lord Hervey, and Horace Walpole, and Lord Chesterfield rarely bring, and still more rarely substantiate, any charges against them on this head. Speaking of the shortcomings of the clergy in the early part of the century, Bishop Burnet, who does not spare his order, carefully guards against the supposition that he accuses them of leading immoral lives. 'When,' he writes, 'I say live better, I mean not only to live without scandal, which I have found the greatest part of them to do, but to lead exemplary lives.'[2] Some years later, Bentley could boldly assert of 'the whole clergy of England' that they were 'the light and glory of Christianity,'[3] an assertion which he would scarcely have dared to make had they been sunk into such a slough of iniquity as they are sometimes represented to have been. Writing to Courayer in 1726, Archbishop Wake laments the infidelity and iniquity which abounded, but is of opinion that 'no care is wanting in our clergy to defend the Christian faith.'[4] John Wesley, while decrying the notion that the unworthiness of the minister vitiates the worth of his ministry, admits that 'in the present century the behaviour of the clergy in general is greatly altered for the better,' although he thinks them deficient both in piety and knowledge. Or if clerical testimony be suspected of partiality, we have abundance of lay evidence all tending to the same conclusion. Smollett, a contemporary, declares that in the reign of George II. 'the clergy were generally pious and exemplary.'[5] When a Presbyterian clergyman talked before Dr. Johnson of fat bishops and drowsy deans, he replied, 'Sir, you know no more of our Church than a Hottentot.'[6] One of the most impartial historians of our own day and country, in dwelling

[1] In Bishop Fleetwood's *Charge at Ely*, August 7, 1716, no less than three folio pages are filled with accounts of the abuse of the clergy, and the way in which the clergy should meet it. Secker's, Butler's, and Horsley's Charges all touch on the same subject.

[2] See the conclusion of Burnet's *History of his Own Times*.

[3] Remarks on Collins's *Discourse on Freethinking*, by Phileleutherus Lipsiensis, xxiii.

[4] Quoted in Mrs. Thomson's *Memoirs of Lady Sundon and the Court and Times of George II.*

[5] Smollett's *Continuation of Hume*, v. 375.

[6] Boswell's *Life*.

upon the immoralities of the age and upon the clerical shortcomings, adds that 'the lives of the clergy were, as a rule, pure.'[1]

It is necessary to bring into prominence such testimony as this because there has been a tendency to insinuate what has never been proved—that the clergy were, as a body, living immoral lives. At the same time it is not desired to palliate their real defects. It is admitted that a more active and earnest performance of their proper duties might have done much more than was done by the clergy to stem the torrent of iniquity.

Yet after all it is doubtful whether the clergy, even if they had been far more energetic and spiritually-minded than they were, could have effected such a reformation as was needed.[2] For there was a long train of causes at work dating back for more than a century, which tended not only to demoralise the nation, but also to cut it off from many influences for good which under happier circumstances the Church might have exercised. The turbulent and unsettled condition of both Church and State in the seventeenth century was bearing its fruit in the eighteenth. As in the life of an individual, so also in the life of a nation, there are certain crises which are terribly perilous to the character. In the eighteenth century England as a nation was going through such a crisis. She was passing from the old order to the new. The early part of the century was a period of many controversies—the Deistic controversy, the Nonjuring controversy, the Bangorian controversy, the Trinitarian controversy, the various ethical controversies, and all these following close upon the Puritan controversy and the Papal controversy, both of which had shaken the Constitution to its very foundation. How was it possible that a country could pass through such stormy scenes without having its faith unsettled, and the basis of its morals weakened? How could some help asking, What is truth? where is it to be found among all these conflicting elements? The Revolution itself was in its immediate effects attended with evil. England submitted to be governed by foreigners, but she had to sacrifice much and stoop low before she could submit to the necessity. All the romantic halo which had hung about royalty was rudely swept away. Queen Anne was the last sovereign of these realms round whom still lingered something of the 'divinity that

[1] Lord Mahon, chap. lxx.

[2] Bishop Butler, in his *Charge to the Clergy of Durham* in 1751, complains very justly, 'It is cruel usage we often meet with, in being censured for not doing what we cannot do, without, what we cannot have, the concurrence of our censurers. Doubtless very much reproach which now lights upon the clergy would be bound to fall elsewhere if due allowance were made for things of this kind.'

doth hedge a king.' Under the Georges loyalty assumed a different form from that which it had taken before. The sentiment which had attached their subjects to the Tudors and the Stuarts was exchanged for a colder and less enthusiastic feeling; mere policy took the place of chivalry.

Nor was it only in her outward affairs that the nation was passing through a great and fundamental change. In her inner and spiritual life she was also in a period of transition. The problem which was started in the early part of the sixteenth century had never yet been fairly worked out. The nation had been for more than a century and a half so busy in dealing with the pressing questions of the hour that it had never yet had time to face the far deeper questions which lay behind these—questions which concerned not the different modes of Christianity, but the very essence of Christianity itself. The matters which had so violently agitated the country in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were now virtually settled. The Church was now at last 'established.' But other questions arose. It was not now asked, 'Is this or that mode of Church government most Scriptural?' 'Is this or that form of worship most in accordance with the mind of Christ?' but, 'What *is* this Scripture to which all appeal?' 'Who *is* this Christ whom all own as Master?' This is really what is meant, so far as religion is concerned, when it is said that the eighteenth century was the age of reason—alike in the good and in the bad sense of that term. The defenders of Christianity, no less than its assailants, had to prove, above all things, the reasonableness of their position. The discussion was inevitable, and in the end productive of good, but while it was going on it could not fail to be to many minds harmful. Reason and faith, though not really antagonistic, are often in seeming antagonism. Many might well ask, Can we no longer rest upon a simple, childlike faith, founded on authority? What is there, human or Divine, that is left to reverence? The heart of England was still sound at the core, and she passed through the crisis triumphantly; but the transition period was a dangerous and a demoralising one, and there is no wonder that she sank for a time under the wave that was passing over her.

It has been already said that the morbid dread of anything which savoured either of Romanism or Puritanism tended to reduce the Church to a dead level of uniform dulness. The same dread affected the nation at large as well as the Church. It practically cut off the laity from influences which might have elevated them. Anything like the worship of God in the beauty of holiness, all that is conveyed in the term symbolism, the due observance of fast and festival—in fact, all those things which

to a certain class of minds are almost essential to raise devotion —were too much associated in men's minds with that dreaded enemy from whom the nation had but narrowly escaped in the preceding age to be able to be turned to any good effect in the eighteenth century.

On the other hand, stirring appeals to the feelings, analyses of spiritual frames—everything, in short, which was termed in the jargon of the seventeenth century 'savoury preaching' and 'a painful ministry,' was too much associated in men's minds with the hated reign of the Saints to be employed with any good effect.

And thus, both on the objective and on the subjective side, the people were practically debarred from influences which might have made their religion a more lovely or a more hearty thing.

Again, if the clergy showed, as they confessedly did, an inertness, an obstructiveness, a want of expansiveness, and a dogged resistance to any adaptation of old forms to new ideas, they were in these respects thoroughly in accord with the feelings of the mass of the nation. The clergy were not popular, but it was not their want of zeal and enterprise which made them unpopular; if in exceptional cases they did show any tendency in these directions, this only made them more unpopular than ever. Had it been otherwise we might naturally have expected to find the zeal which was lacking in the National Church showing itself in other Christian bodies. But we find nothing of the sort. The torpor which had overtaken our Church extended itself to all forms of Christianity. Edmund Calamy, a Nonconformist, lamented in 1730 that 'a real decay of serious religion, both in the Church *and out of it*, was very visible.' Dr. Watts declares that in his day 'there was a *general* decay of vital religion in the hearts and lives of men.'[1] A modern writer who makes no secret of his partiality for Nonconformists owns that 'religion, whether in the Established Church or out of it, never made less progress than after the cessation of the Bangorian and Salter's Hall disputes. Breadth of thought and charity of sentiment increased, but religious activity did not.'[2] In 1712 Defoe considered 'Dissenters' interests to be in a declining state, not so much as regarded their wealth and numbers as the qualifications of their ministers, the decay of piety, and the abandonment of their political friends.' Such is the testimony of Nonconformists themselves, who will not be suspected of taking too dark a view

[1] Calamy's *Life and Times*, vol. ii. p. 531.

[2] Skeats's *History of the Free Churches*, pp. 248, 313. 'The strictness of Puritanism, without its strength or piety, was beginning to reign among Dissenters.'

of the condition of Nonconformity. There is no need to add to this the evidence of Churchmen. It is a fact patent to all students of the period that the moral and religious stagnation of the times extended to all religious bodies outside as well as inside the National Church. The most intellectually active part of Dissent was drifting gradually into Socinianism and Unitarianism.

There is yet one more circumstance to be taken into account in estimating the extent to which the clergy were responsible for the irreligion and immorality which prevailed. A change of manners was fast rendering ineffectual a weapon which they had formerly used for waging war against sin. Ecclesiastical censures were becoming little better than a mere *brutum fulmen*. Complaints of the difficulty, not to say impossibility, of enforcing Church discipline are of constant occurrence. In 1704 Archbishop Sharp, while urging his clergy to present 'any that are resolved to continue heathens and absolutely refuse to come to church,' and, while admitting that the abuses of the commutation for penance were 'a cause of complaints against the spiritual courts and of the invidious reflections cast upon them,' adds that 'he was very sensible both of the decay of discipline in general and of the curbs put upon any effectual prosecution of it by the temporal courts, and of the difficulty of keeping up what little was left entire to the ecclesiastics without creating offence and administering matter for aspersion and evil surmises.'[1] The same excellent prelate, when a writ *de excommunicato capiendo* was evaded by writs of *supersedeas* from Chancery, wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury asking him 'to represent the case to the Lord Chancellor, that he might give such directions that his courts might go on to enforce ecclesiastical censures with civil penalties, without fear of being baffled in their proceedings.'[2] In the later meetings of Convocation this subject of the enforcement of Church discipline was constantly suggested for discussion; but, as questions which were, or were supposed to be, of more immediate interest claimed precedence, no practical result ensued.[3] The matter, however, was not suffered to fall altogether into abeyance. In 1741 Bishop Secker gives the same advice to the clergy of the diocese of Oxford as Archbishop Sharp had given nearly forty years before to those of the diocese of York, but he seems still more doubtful as to whether it could be effectually carried out. 'Persons,' he writes, 'who profess not to be of our

[1] *Life of Archbishop Sharp*, by his Son, edited by T. Newcome, p. 214.
[2] Id. p. 217.
[3] See *The History of the Present Parliament and Convocation*, 1711; and Cardwell's *Synodalia*, vol. ii. for the years 1710, 1712, 1713, 1715.

Church, if persuasions will not avail, must be let alone. But other absentees must, after due patience, be told that, unwilling as you are, it will be your duty to present them, unless they reform; and if, when this warning hath been repeated and full time allowed for it to work, they still persist in their obstinacy, I beg you to do it. For this will tend much to prevent the contagion from spreading, of which there is else great danger.' In 1753 he repeats his injunctions, but in a still more desponding tone. 'Offences,' he says, 'against religion and morals churchwardens are bound by oath to present; and incumbents or curates are empowered and charged by the 113th and following canons to join with them in presenting, if need be, or to present alone if they refuse. This implies what the 26th canon expresses, that the minister is to urge churchwardens to perform that part of their office. Try first by public and private rebukes to amend them; but if these are ineffectual, get them corrected by authority. I am perfectly sensible that immorality and irreligion are grown almost beyond the reach of ecclesiastical power, which, having in former times been very unwarrantably extended, hath since been very unjustly and imprudently cramped and weakened many ways.' After having given directions about excommunications and penance, he urges them, as a last resort, 'to remind the people that, however the censures of the Church may be relaxed or evaded, yet God's judgment cannot.' Yet even so late as 1766 he explains to candidates for orders the text addressed to them at their ordination, 'Whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained,' as conferring 'a right of inflicting ecclesiastical censures for a shorter or longer time, and of taking them off, which is, in regard to external communion, retaining or forgiving offences.' 'Our acts,' he adds, 'as those of temporal judges, are to be respected as done by competent authority. Nor will other proofs of repentance be sufficient if submission to the discipline of the Church of Christ, when it hath been offended and requires due satisfaction, be obstinately refused.'[1] This is not the place to discuss the possibility or the advisability under altered circumstances of enforcing ecclesiastical discipline, but in common fairness to the clergy, who were accused of doing little or nothing to oppose the general depravity, it should be borne in mind that they were practically debarred from using a formidable weapon which in earlier times had been wielded with great effect.[2]

Nor should we forget that if the clergy were inactive and un-

[1] See Secker's *Charges, passim.*

[2] The circumstances in the Isle of Man were of course exceptional. For specimens of the rigour with which good Bishop Wilson maintained ecclesiastical discipline there see Stowell's *Life of Wilson*, pp. 198, 199, &c.

successful in one direction, many of them at least were singularly active and successful in another. There was within the pale of the Church at the period of which we are speaking a degree of intellect and learning which has rarely been surpassed in its palmiest days. When among the higher clergy were found such men as Butler, and Hare, and Sherlock, and Warburton, and South, and Conybeare, and Waterland, and Bentley, men who were more than a match for the assailants of Christianity, formidable as these antagonists undoubtedly were—when within her fold were found men of such distinguished piety as Law and Wilson, Berkeley and Benson, the state of the Church could not be wholly corrupt.

And, finally, it should be remembered that if England was morally and spiritually in low estate at this period, she was, at any rate, in a better plight than her neighbours. If there were Church abuses in England, there were still worse in France. If there was too wide an interval here between the higher and the lower clergy, the inequality was not so great as there, where, 'while the prelates of the Church lived with a pomp and state falling little short of the magnificence of royalty, not a few of the poorer clergy had scarcely the wherewithal to live at all,' where 'the superior clergy regarded the curés as hired servitors, whom in order to dominate it was prudent to keep in poverty and ignorance.' If the distribution of patronage on false principles and the inordinate love of preferment were abuses in England, matters were worse in France, where 'there was an open traffic in benefices; the Episcopate was nothing but a secular dignity; it was necessary to be count or marquis in order to become a successor of the apostles, unless some extraordinary event snatched some little bishopric for a parvenu from the hands of the minister;' and where 'the bishops squandered the revenues of their provinces at the court.'[1] If the lower classes were neglected here, they were not, as in France, dying from misery and hunger at the rate of a million a year. Neither, sordid as the age was in England, was it so sordid as in Germany, where a coarse eudæmonism and a miscalled illuminism were sapping the foundations of Christianity.

Moreover, England, unlike her next-door neighbour, improved as the years rolled on. A gradual but distinct alteration for the better may be traced in the later part of the century. Many causes contributed to effect this. After the accession of George III. a growing sense of security began to pervade the country.

[1] *Le Clergé de Quatre-vingt-neuf*, par J. Wallon, quoted in the *Church Quarterly Review* for October 1877, art. v., 'France in the Eighteenth Century.'

An unsettled state is always prejudicial to national morals, and there were henceforward no serious thoughts of deranging the established order of things. Influences, too, were at work which tended to raise the tone of morality and religion in all orders of society. The upper classes had a good example set them by the blameless lives of the King and the Queen. In the present day, when it is the fashion to ridicule the foibles and to condemn the troublesome interference in State affairs of the well-meaning but often ill-judging King, it is the more necessary to bear in mind the debt of gratitude which the nation owed him for the good effects which his personal character unquestionably produced—effects which, though they told more directly and immediately upon the upper classes, yet permeated more or less through all the strata of society. Among the middle classes, too, there arose a set of men whose influence for good it would be difficult to exaggerate. Foremost among them stands the great and good Dr. Johnson. 'Dr. Johnson,' writes Lord Mahon, 'stemmed the tide of infidelity.' And the greatest of modern satirists does not state the case too strongly when he declares that 'Johnson had the ear of the nation. His immense authority reconciled it to loyalty and shamed it out of irreligion. He was revered as a sort of oracle, and the oracle declared for Church and King. He was a fierce foe to all sin, but a gentle enemy to all sinners.'[1] Sir J. Reynolds, and E. Burke, and Hogarth, and Pitt, each in his way, helped on the good work The rising Evangelical school—the Newtons, the Venns, the Cecils, the Romaines, among the clergy, and the Wilberforces, the Thorntons, the Mores, the Cowpers, among the laity—all affected beneficially to an immense extent the upper and middle classes, while among the lower classes the Methodist movement was effecting incalculable good. These latter influences, however, were far too important an element in the national amelioration to be dealt with at the end of a chapter. Suffice it here to add that, glaring as were the abuses of the Church of the eighteenth century, they could not and did not destroy her undying vitality. Even when she reached her nadir there was sufficient salt left to preserve the mass from becoming utterly corrupt. The fire had burnt low, but there was yet enough light and heat left to be fanned into a flame which was in due time to illumine the nation and the nation's Church.

J. H. O.

[1] W. M. Thackeray, *English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century.*

CHAPTER IX.

THE EVANGELICAL REVIVAL.

(1) THE METHODIST MOVEMENT.

THE middle part of the eighteenth century presents a somewhat curious spectacle to the student of Church history. From one point of view the Church of England seemed to be signally successful ; from another, signally unsuccessful. Intellectually her work was a great triumph, morally and spiritually it was a great failure. She passed not only unscathed, but with greatly increased strength, through a serious crisis. She crushed most effectually an attack which, if not really very formidable or very systematic, was at any rate very noisy and very violent ; and her success was at least as much due to the strength of her friends as to the weakness of her foes. So completely did she beat her assailants out of the field that for some time they were obliged to make their assaults under a masked battery in order to obtain a popular hearing at all. It should never be forgotten that the period in which the Church sank to her nadir in one sense was also the period in which she almost reached her zenith in another sense. The intellectual giants who flourished in the reigns of the first two Georges cleared the way for that revival which is the subject of these pages. It was in consequence of the successful results of their efforts that the ground was opened to the heart-stirring preachers and disinterested workers who gave practical effect to the truths which had been so ably vindicated. It was unfortunate that there should ever have been any antagonism between men who were really workers in the same great cause. Neither could have done the other's part of the work. Warburton could have no more moved the hearts of living masses to their inmost depths, as Whitefield did, than Whitefield could have written the 'Divine Legation.' Butler could no more have carried on the great crusade against sin and Satan which Wesley did, than Wesley could have written the 'Analogy.' But without such work as Wesley and Whitefield did, Butler's and Warburton's would have been comparatively inefficacious ; and without such work as Butler and Warburton did, Wesley's and Whitefield's work would have been, humanly speaking, impossible.

The truths of Christianity required not only to be defended, but to be applied to the heart and life ; and this was the special work of what has been called, for want of a better term, 'the

Evangelical school.' The term is not altogether a satisfactory one, because it seems to imply that this school alone held the distinctive doctrines of Christianity. But this was by no means the case. All the great features of that system which is summed up in the term 'the Gospel' may be plainly recognised in the writings of those theologians who belonged to a different and in some respects a violently antagonistic school of thought. The fall of man, his redemption by Christ, his sanctification by the Holy Spirit, his absolute need of God's grace both preventing and following him—these are doctrines which an unprejudiced reader will find as clearly enunciated in the writings of Waterland, and Butler, and Warburton as by those who are called *par excellence* Evangelical writers. And yet it is perfectly true that there is a sense in which the latter may fairly claim the epithet 'Evangelical' as peculiarly their own; for they made what had sunk too generally into a mere barren theory a living and fruitful reality. The truths which they brought into prominence were not new truths, nor truths which were actually denied, but they were truths which acquired under the vigorous preaching of the revivalists a freshness and a vitality, and an influence over men's practice, which they had to a great extent ceased to exercise. In this sense the revival of which we are to treat may with perfect propriety be termed the *Evangelical* Revival. The epithet is more suitable than either 'Methodist' or 'Puritan,' both of which are misleading. The term 'Methodist' does not, of course, in itself imply anything discreditable or contemptuous; but it was given as a name of contempt, and was accepted as such by those to whom it was first applied. Moreover, not only the term, but also the system with which it has become identified was repudiated by many—perhaps by the majority—of those who would be included under the title of 'Evangelical.' It was not because they feared the ridicule and contempt attaching to the term 'Methodist' that so many disowned its application to themselves, but because they really disapproved of many things which were supposed to be connoted by the term. Their adversaries would persist in confounding them with those who gloried in the title of 'Methodists,' but the line of demarcation is really very distinct.

Still more misleading is the term 'Puritan.' The 'Evangelicalism' of the eighteenth century was by no means simply a revival of the system properly called Puritanism as it existed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There were, of course, certain leading features which were common to the two schemes. We can recognise a sort of family likeness in the strictness of life prescribed by both systems, in their abhorrence of certain

kinds of amusement, in their fondness for Scriptural phraseology, and, above all, in the importance which they both attached to the distinctive doctrines of Christianity. But the points of difference between them were at least as marked as the points of resemblance. In Puritanism, politics were inextricably intermixed with theology; Evangelicalism stood quite aloof from politics. The typical Puritan was gloomy and austere; the typical Evangelical was bright and genial. The Puritan would not be kept *within* the pale of the National Church; the Evangelical would not be kept *out* of it. The Puritan was dissatisfied with our liturgy, our ceremonies, our vestments, and our hierarchy; the Evangelical was not only perfectly contented with every one of these things, but was ready to contend for them all as heartily as the highest of High Churchmen. The Puritans produced a very powerful body of theological literature; the Evangelicals were more conspicuous as good men and stirring preachers than as profound theologians. On the other hand, if Puritanism was the more fruitful in theological literature, both devotional and controversial, Evangelicalism was infinitely more fruitful in works of piety and benevolence; there was hardly a single missionary or philanthropic scheme of the day which was not either originated or warmly taken up by the Evangelical party. The Puritans were frequently in antagonism with 'the powers that be,' the Evangelicals never; no amount of ill-treatment could put them out of love with our constitution both in Church and State.

These points will be further illustrated in the course of this chapter; they are touched upon here merely to show that neither 'Methodist' nor 'Puritan' would be an adequate description of the great revival whose course we are now to follow; only it should be noted that in terming it the 'Evangelical' revival we are applying to it an epithet which was not applied until many years after its rise. When and by whom the term was first used to describe the movement it is difficult to say. Towards the close of the century it is not unusual to find among writers of different views censures of those 'who have arrogated to themselves the exclusive title of Evangelical,' as if there were something presumptuous in the claim, and something uncharitable in the tacit assumption that none but those so called were worthy of the designation; but it is very unusual indeed to find the writers of the Evangelical school applying the title to their own party; and when they do it is generally followed by some apology, intimating that they only use it because it has become usual in common parlance. There is not the slightest evidence to show that the early Evangelicals claimed the title as their own in any spirit of self-glorification.

Thus much of the name. Let us now turn to the thing itself. How did this great movement, so fruitful in good to the whole community, first arise?

It is somewhat remarkable that, so far as the revival can be traced to any one individual, the man to whom the credit belongs was never himself an Evangelical. '*William Law*' (1686–1761) 'begot Methodism,' wrote Bishop Warburton; and in one sense the statement was undoubtedly true,[1] but what a curious paradox it suggests! A distinctly High Churchman was the originator of what afterwards became the Low Church party—a Nonjuror, of the most decidedly 'Orange' element in the Church; a Quietist who scarcely ever quitted his retirement in an obscure Northamptonshire village, of that party which, above all others, was distinguished for its activity, bodily no less than spiritual; a clergyman who rarely preached a sermon, of the party whose great forte was preaching!

As Law had no further share in the Evangelical movement beyond writing the 'Serious Call,' there is no need to dwell upon his singular career. We may pass on at once from the master to one of his most appreciative and distinguished disciples.

If Law was the most effective writer, *John Wesley* (1703–91) was unquestionably the most effective worker connected with the early phase of the Evangelical revival. If Law gave the first impulse to the movement, Wesley was the first and the ablest who turned it to practical account. How he formed at Oxford a little band of High Church ascetics; how he went forth to Georgia on an unsuccessful mission, and returned to England a sadder and a wiser man; how he fell under the influence of the Moravians; how his whole course and habits of mind were changed on one eventful day in 1738; how for more than half a century he went about doing good through evil report and good report; how he encountered with undaunted courage opposition from all quarters from the Church which he loved, and from the people whom he only wished to benefit; how he formed societies, and organised them with marvellous skill; how he travelled thousands of miles, and preached thousands of sermons throughout the length and breadth of England, in Scotland, in Ireland, and in America; how he became involved in controversies with his friends and fellow-workers—is not all this and much more written in books which may be in everybody's hands—in the books of Southey, of Tyerman, of Watson, of Beecham, of Stevens, of Coke and Moore, of Isaac Taylor, of Julia Wedg-

[1] More true than the assertion which follows—'and Count Zinzendorf rocked the cradle.'

wood, of Urlin, and of many others? It need not, therefore, be repeated here. Neither is it necessary to vindicate the character of this great and good man from the imputations which were freely cast upon him both by his contemporaries (and that not only by the adversaries, but by many of the friends and promoters of the Evangelical movement), and also by some of his later biographers. The saying of Mark Antony—

> The evil that men do lives after them;
> The good is oft interred with their bones—

has been reversed in the case of John Wesley. Posterity has fully acquitted him of the charge of being actuated by a mere vulgar ambition, of desiring to head a party, of an undue love of power. It has at last owned that if ever a poor frail human being was actuated by pure and disinterested motives, that man was John Wesley. Eight years before his death he said, 'I have been reflecting on my past life; I have been wandering up and down between fifty and sixty years, endeavouring in my poor way to do a little good to my fellow-creatures.' And the more closely his career has been analysed, the more plainly has the truth of his own words been proved. His quarrel was solely with sin and Satan. His master passion was, in his own often-repeated expression, the love of God and the love of man for God's sake. The world has at length done tardy justice to its benefactor. Indeed, the danger seems now to lie in a different direction—not, indeed, in over-estimating the character of this remarkable man, but in making him a mere name to conjure with, a mere peg to hang pet theories upon. The Churchman casts in the teeth of the Dissenter John Wesley's unabated attachment to the Church; the Dissenter casts in the teeth of the Churchman the bad treatment Wesley received from the Church; and each can make out a very fair case for his own side. But meanwhile the real John Wesley is apt to be presented to us in a very one-sided fashion. Moreover, his character has suffered from the partiality of injudicious friends quite as much as from the unjust accusations of enemies. It is peculiarly cruel to represent him as a faultless being, a sort of vapid angel. We can never take much interest in such a character, because we feel quite sure that, if the whole truth were before us, he would appear in a different light. John Wesley's character is a singularly interesting one, interesting for this very reason, that he was such a thorough man—full of human infirmities, constantly falling into errors of judgment and inconsistencies, but withal a noble specimen of humanity, a monument of the power of Divine grace to mould the rough materials of which man is made into a

polished stone, meet to take its place in the fabric of the temple of the living God.

The best interpreter of John Wesley is John Wesley himself. He has left us in his own writings a picture of himself, drawn by his own hand, which is far more faithful than that which has been drawn by any other.

The whole family of the Wesleys, including the father, the mother, and all the brothers and sisters without exception, was a very interesting one. There are certain traits of character which seem to have been common to them all. Strong, vigorous good sense, an earnest, straightforward desire to do their duty, a decidedness in forming opinions, and a plainness, not to say bluntness, in expressing them, belong to all alike. The picture given us of the family at Epworth Rectory is an illustration of the remark made in another chapter that the wholesale censure of the whole body of the parochial clergy in the early part of the eighteenth century has been far too sweeping and severe. Here is an instance—and it is not spoken of as a unique, or even an exceptional, instance—of a worthy clergyman who was, with his whole family, living an exemplary life, and adorning the profession to which he belonged. The influence of his early training, and especially that of his mother, is traceable throughout the whole of Wesley's career ; and it is not unreasonable to suppose that Wesley's unflinching attachment to the Church, his reluctance to speak ill of her ministers,[1] and the displeasure which he constantly showed when he observed any tendency on the part of his followers to separate from her communion, may have been intensified by his recollections of that good and useful parson's family in Lincolnshire in which he passed his youth.

The year 1729 is the date which Wesley himself gives of the rise of that revival of religion in which he himself took so prominent a part. It is somewhat curious that he places the commencement of the revival at a date nine years earlier than that of his own conversion ; but it must be remembered that in his later years he took a somewhat different view of the latter event from that which he held in his hot youth. He believed that before 1738 he had faith in God as a servant ; after that, as a son. At any rate, we shall not be far wrong in regarding that little meeting at Oxford of a few young men, called in derision the Holy Club, the Sacramentarian Club, and finally the *Methodists*, as the germ of that great movement now to be described. No doubt the views of its members materially changed in the

[1] He was, however, sometimes tempted to use unseemly language of the clergy. See extracts from his journals quoted in Warburton's *Doctrine of Grace*.

course of years ; but the object of the later movement was precisely the same as that of the little band from the very first—viz. to promote the love of God and the love of man for God's sake, to stem the torrent of vice and irreligion, and to fill the land with a godly and useful population.

This, it is verily believed, was from first to last the master key to a right understanding of John Wesley's life. Everything must give way to this one great object. In subservience to this he was ready to sacrifice many predilections, and thereby to lay himself open to the charge of changeableness and inconsistency.

As an illustration let us take the somewhat complicated question of John Wesley's Churchmanship. That he was most sincerely and heartily attached to the Church of England is undeniable. In the language of one of his most ardent but not undiscriminating admirers, 'he was a Church of England man even in circumstantials ; there was not a service or a ceremony, a gesture or a habit, for which he had not an unfeigned predilection.'[1] He was, in fact, a distinctly High Churchman, but a High Churchman in a far nobler sense than that in which the term was generally used in the eighteenth century. Indeed, in this latter sense John Wesley hardly falls under the denomination at all. As a staunch supporter of the British Constitution, both in Church and State, he was no doubt in favour of the establishment of the National Church as an essential part of that Constitution. But it was not this view of the Church which was uppermost in his mind. On several occasions he spoke and wrote of the Church as a national establishment in terms which would have shocked the political High Churchmen of his day. He 'can find no trace of a national Church in the New Testament ;' it is 'a mere political institution ;'[2] 'the establishment by Constantine was a gigantic evil ;' 'the King and the Parliament have no right to prescribe to him what pastor he shall use ;'[3] he does not care to discuss the question as to whether all outward establish-

[1] 'Remarks on the Life and Character of John Wesley,' by Alexander Knox, printed at the close of Southey's *Life of Wesley*, vol. iii. p. 319.

[2] In the Minutes of Conference, 1747, 'What instance or ground is there in the New Testament for a "*national*" Church? We know none at all,' &c. 'The greatest blow,' he said, 'Christianity ever received was when Constantine the Great called himself a Christian and poured in a flood of riches, honour, and power upon the Christians, more especially upon the clergy.' 'If, as my Lady says, all outward establishments are Babel, so is this establishment. Let it stand for me. I neither set it up nor pull it down. . . . Let us build the city of God.'

[3] But he asserts the rights of the civil power in things indifferent, and reminds a correspondent that allegiance to a national Church in no way affects allegiance to Christ.—(Letter in answer to Toogood's *Dissent Justified*, 1752. *Works*, x. 503–6.)

ments are a Babel. But does it follow from this and similar language that he taught, as the historians of the Dissenters contend, the principles and language of Dissent?[1] Very far from it. The fact is, John Wesley in his conception of the Church was both before and behind his age. He would have found abundance of sympathisers with his views in the seventeenth, and abundance after the first thirty years of the nineteenth, century. But in the eighteenth century they were quite out of date. Here and there a man like Jones of Nayland or Bishop Horsley[2] might express High Church views of the same kind as those of John Wesley, but they were quite out of harmony with the general spirit of the times. Wesley's idea of the Church was not like that of high and dry Churchmen of his day; that Church which was always 'in danger' was not what he meant; neither was it, like that of the later Evangelical school, the Church of the Reformation period. He went back to far earlier times, and took for his model in doctrine and worship the Primitive Church before its divisions into East and West. Thus we find him recording with evident satisfaction at Christmastide, 1774, 'During the twelve festival days we had the Lord's Supper daily —*a little emblem of the Primitive Church*.'[3] When he first appointed district visitors he looked with great satisfaction upon the arrangement, because it reminded him of the deaconesses of the Primitive Church. In the very act which tended most of all to the separation of Wesley's followers from the Church he was still led—or, as some will think, misled—by his desire to follow in what he conceived to be the steps of the Primitive Church. His ideas of worship are strictly in accordance with what would now be called High Church usages. He would have no pews, but open benches alike for all; he would have the men and the women separated, *as they were in the Primitive Church*;[4] he would have a hearty congregational service. When it was seasonable to sing praise to God, they were to do it with the spirit and the understanding also; 'not in the miserable, scandalous doggerel of Sternhold and Hopkins, but in psalms and

[1] See Bogue and Bennett's *History of Dissenters*, vol. i. p. 73.

[2] Bishop Horsley, in his first Charge to the Diocese of St. David's, 1790, expressly distinguishes between a High Churchman in the sense of 'a bigot to the secular rights of the priesthood,' which he declares he is not, and a High Churchman in the sense of an 'upholder of the spiritual authority of the priesthood,' which he owns that he is; and he adds, 'We are more than mere hired servants of the State or laity.'

[3] To the same effect in 1777.

[4] So late as 1780 he wrote, 'If I come into any new house, and see men and women together, I will immediately go out.' This was, therefore, no youthful High Church prejudice, which wore off with years.

hymns which are both sense and poetry, such as would sooner provoke a critic to turn Christian than a Christian to turn critic ;' they were to sing 'not lolling at their ease, or in the indecent posture of sitting, but all standing before God, praising Him lustily and with a good courage ;' there was to be 'no repetition of words, no dwelling on disjointed syllables.'[1] Wesley was much struck with the remarkable decorum with which public worship was conducted by the Scotch Episcopal Church, which has always been more inclined to High Church usages than her English sister.[2] The Fasts and Festivals of the Church Wesley desired to observe most scrupulously: every Friday was to be kept as a day of abstinence ; the very children at Kingswood school were, if healthy, to fast every Friday till 3 P.M. All Saints' Day was his favourite festival, and he made it his constant practice on that day to preach on the Communion of Saints. He distinctly implies that he considers the celebration of the Holy Communion an essential part of the public service at least on every Lord's Day, and adduces this as a proof that the service at his own meetings must necessarily be imperfect. From his private memoranda, quoted by Mr. Urlin,[3] we find that he believed it to be a duty to observe so far as he could the following rules:—(1) to baptize by immersion ; (2) to use the mixed chalice ; (3) to pray for the faithful departed ; (4) to pray standing on the Sunday in Pentecost. He thought it prudent (1) to observe the stations [Wednesday and Friday], (2) to keep Lent and especially Holy Week, (3) to turn to the east at the Creed. It is useless to speculate upon what might have been ; but can it be doubted that if John Wesley's lot had been cast in the nineteenth instead of the eighteenth century, he would have found much to fascinate him in another revival, which, like his own, began at Oxford ?

But how was it that if John Wesley showed this strong appreciation of the æsthetic and the symbolical in public worship, this desire to bring everything to the model of the Primitive Church, he never impressed these views upon his followers ? How is it that so few traces of these predilections are to be found in his printed sermons ? John Wesley had so immense an influence over his disciples that he could have led them to almost anything. How was it that he infused into them nothing whatever of that spirit which was in him ?

The answer to these questions is to be found in the fact which, it may be remembered, led to these remarks. There is but one clue to the right understanding of Wesley's career. It is this : that his one great object was to promote the love

[1] See Southey's *Life of Wesley*, ii. 85. [2] Id. 101.
[3] *John Wesley's Place in Church History*, by R. Denny Urlin, p. 70.

of God and the love of man for God's sake. Everything must give way to this object of paramount importance. His tastes led him in one direction, but it was a direction in which very few could follow him. Not only was there absolutely nothing congenial to this taste either inside or outside the Church in the eighteenth century, but it would have been simply unintelligible. If he had followed out this taste, he would have been isolated.

Moreover, it is fully admitted that Wesley was essentially a many-sided man. Look at him from another point of view, and he stands in precisely the same attitude in which his contemporaries and successors of the Evangelical school stood—as the *homo unius libri*, referring everything to Scripture, and to Scripture alone. There would be in his mind no inconsistency whatever between the one position and the other; but he felt he could do more practical good by simply standing upon Scriptural ground, and therefore he was quite content to rest there.

It was precisely the same motive which led Wesley to the various separations which, to his sorrow, he was obliged to make from those who had been his fellow-workers. He has been accused of being a quarrelsome man, a man with whom it was not easy to be on good terms. The accusation is unjust. Never was a man more ready to forgive injuries, more ready to own his failings, more firm to his friends, and more patient with his foes.

Nevertheless it is an undoubted fact that he was frequently brought into collision with men whom he would have been the first to own as God's faithful servants—with William Law, with the Moravians, with Whitefield and the Calvinists, and with several of the Evangelical parish clergymen. It also cannot be denied that he showed some abruptness—nay, rudeness—in his communications with some of these.

But in each and all of these cases the clue to his conduct is still the same; his one desire was to do all the good he could to the souls of men, and to that great object friends, united action, and even common politeness must give way. To come to details. In 1738 he wrote an angry letter, and in 1756 an angry pamphlet, to William Law. Both these effusions were hasty and indiscreet; but, in spite of his indiscretion and discourtesy, it is easy to trace both in the letter and the pamphlet the one motive which actuated him. Law was far more than a match for Wesley in any purely intellectual dispute. But Wesley's fault, whatever it may have been, was a fault of the head, not of the heart. It is thoroughly characteristic of the generous and forgiving nature of the man that, in spite of their differences, Wesley constantly alluded to Law in his sermons, and always in terms of the warmest commendation.

The same motive which led Wesley to dispute with Law

actuated him in his separation from the Moravians. In justice to that exemplary body it must be remembered that they were not well represented in London when Wesley split from them The mischievous notion that it was contrary to the Gospel for a man to search the Scriptures, to pray, to communicate—in fact, to use any ordinances—before he had faith, that it was his duty simply to sit still and wait till this was given him, would, if it had gained ground, have been absolutely fatal to Wesley's efforts. He could not even tacitly countenance those who held such tenets without grievous hindrance to his work.[1] One is thankful to learn that he resisted his besetting temptation, and did not send to the Herrnhut brethren a rude letter which he had written,[2] and thankful also to find that he did full justice to the good qualities of Count Zinzendorf.[3] But as to his separation from the London Moravians, Wesley could not have acted otherwise without seriously damaging the cause which he had at heart.

His dispute with Whitefield will come under our notice in connexion with the Calvinistic controversy, which forms a painfully conspicuous feature in the Evangelical movement. It is sufficient in this place to remark that the Antinomianism which, as a plain matter of fact, admitted even by the Calvinists themselves, did result from the perversion of Calvinism, was, if possible, a more fatal hindrance to Wesley's work than the Moravian stillness itself. This was obviously the ground of Wesley's dislike of Calvinism,[4] but it did not separate him from Calvinists; so far as a separation did ensue the fault did not lie with Wesley.[5]

[1] 'You have often,' said Wesley to the Moravians in Fetter Lane, 'affirmed that to search the Scripture, to pray, or to communicate before we have faith, is to seek salvation by works, and that till these works are laid aside no man can have faith. I believe these assertions to be flatly contrary to the word of God. I have warned you hereof again and again, and besought you to turn back to the law and to the testimony.'

[2] 'Do you not neglect joint fasting? Is not the Count all in all? Are not the rest mere shadows? . . . Do you not magnify your Church too much?' &c., &c.

[3] 'I labour everywhere to speak consistently with that deep sense which is settled in my heart that you are (though I cannot call you, Rabbi, infallible, yet) far, far, better and wiser than me.'

[4] And also his strong feeling that the doctrine of reprobation was inconsistent with the love of God. 'I could sooner,' he wrote, 'be a Turk, a Deist—yea, an atheist—than I could believe this. It is less absurd to deny the very existence of a God than to make Him an almighty tyrant.'

[5] In March 1741 Mr. Whitefield, being returned to England, entirely separated from Mr. Wesley and his friends, because he did not hold the decrees. Here was the first breach which warm men persuaded Mr. Whitefield to make merely for a difference of opinion. Those who believed universal redemption had no desire to separate,' &c.—Wesley's *Works*, vol. viii. p. 335.

His misunderstanding with some of the Evangelical clergy of his day arose from the same cause as that which led him into other disputes. An overpowering sense of the paramount importance of the great work which he had to do made him set aside everything which he considered to be an obstacle to that work without the slightest hesitation. Now, much as Wesley loved the Church of England, he never appreciated one of her most marked features, the parochial system. Perhaps under any circumstances such a system would have found little favour in the eyes of one of Wesley's temperament. To a man impatient of immediate results the slowly but surely working influence of a pastor resident in the midst of his flock, preaching to them a silent sermon every day and almost every hour by his example among them, would naturally seem flat, tame, and impalpable when compared with the more showy effects resulting from the rousing preaching of the itinerant. Such a life as that of the parish priest would have been to Wesley himself simply unbearable. He was of opinion—surely a most erroneous opinion—that if he were confined to one spot he should preach himself and his whole congregation to sleep in a twelvemonth. He never estimated at its proper value the real, solid work which others were doing in their respective parishes. He bitterly regretted that Fletcher would persist in wasting his sweetness on the desert air of Madeley. He had little faith in the permanency of the good which the apostolic Walker was doing at Truro. Much as he esteemed Venn of Huddersfield, he could not be content to leave the parish in his hands. He expressed himself very strongly to Adam of Winteringham on the futility of his work in his parish. He utterly rejected Walker's advice that he should induce some of his itinerant preachers to be ordained and to settle in country parishes. He thought that this would not only narrow their sphere of usefulness, but also cripple their energies even in that contracted sphere. Mistaken as we may believe him to have been in these opinions, we cannot doubt his thorough sincerity. In the slight collision into which he was necessarily brought with the Evangelical clergy by acting upon these views he was actuated by no vulgar desire to make himself a name by encroaching upon other men's labours, but solely by the conviction that he must do the work of God in the best way he could, no matter whom he might offend or alienate by so doing. Order and regularity were good things in their way, but better do the work of God irregularly than let it be half-done or undone in the regular way.[1] He predicted that even the earnest

[1] 'If there be a law,' he wrote in 1761, 'that a minister of Christ who is not suffered to preach the Gospel in church should not preach it else-

parochial clergy of his day would prove a mere rope of sand—a prophecy which subsequent events will scarcely endorse.

Not that John Wesley ever desired to upset the parochial system. From first to last he consistently maintained his position that his work was not to supplant but to supplement the ordinary work of the Church. This supplementary agency formed so important a factor in the Evangelical revival, and its arrangement was so characteristic of John Wesley, that a few words on the subject seem necessary. It would fill too much space to describe in detail the constitution of the first Methodist societies. It is now purposed to consider them simply in their relation to their founder. The most superficial sketch of the life and character of John Wesley would be imperfect if it did not touch upon this subject; for, after all, it is as the founder, and organiser, and ruler of these societies that John Wesley is best known. There were connected with the Evangelical revival other writers as able, other preachers as effective, other workers as indefatigable, as he was; but there were none who displayed anything like the administrative talent that he did. From first to last Wesley held over this large and ever-increasing agency an absolute supremacy. His word was literally law, and that law extended not only to strictly religious matters, but to the minutest details of daily life. It is most amusing to read his letters to his itinerant preachers, whom he addresses in the most familiar terms. 'Dear Tommy' is told that he is never to sit up later than ten. In general he (Mr. Wesley) desires him to go to bed about a quarter after nine.[1] 'Dear Sammy' is reminded, 'You are called to obey *me* as a son in the Gospel. But who can prove that you are so called to obey any other person?' Another helper is admonished, 'Scream no more, at the peril of your soul. Speak with all your heart, but with a moderate voice. It is said of our Lord, "He shall not cry"—literally, scream.' The helpers generally are commanded 'not to affect the gentleman. You have no more to do with this character than with that of a dancing-master.' And again, 'Do not mend our rules, but keep them,' with much more to the same effect. His preachers in Ireland are instructed how they are to avoid falling into the dirty habits of the country, and the most minute and delicate rules about personal cleanliness are laid down for them.

The congregations are ruled in almost the same lordly fashion

where, or a law that forbids Christian people to hear the Gospel of Christ out of their parish church when they cannot hear it therein, I judge that law to be absolutely sinful, and that it is sinful to obey it.'

[1] See Tyerman's *Life of Wesley*, ii. 545.

as the preachers. Of a certain congregation at Norwich Wesley writes, 'I told them in plain terms that they were the most ignorant, self-conceited, self-willed, fickle, untractable, disorderly, disjointed society that I knew in the three kingdoms. And God applied it to their hearts, so that many were profited, but I do not find that one was offended.'[1] At one time he had an idea that tea was expensive and unwholesome, and his people are commanded to abstain from the deleterious beverage, and so to 'keep from sickness and pay their debts.' 'Many,' he writes, 'tell me to my face I can persuade this people to anything;' so he tried to persuade them to this. In the same year (1746) he determines to physic them all. 'I thought,' he says, 'of a kind of desperate experiment. I will prepare and give them physic myself.' This indefatigable man provided for their minds as well as for their souls and bodies. He furnished them with a 'Christian library,' writing, abridging, and condensing many books himself, and recommending and editing others; and few, probably, of the early Methodists read anything else.

As to the Conference, Wesley clearly gave its members to understand that his autocracy was to be in no way limited by their action. '*They* did not,' he writes, 'desire the meeting, but *I* did, knowing that in the multitude of counsellors there is safety. But,' he adds significantly, 'I sent for them to advise, not to govern me. Neither did I at any of those times divest myself of any part of that power which the providence of God cast upon me without any desire or design of mine. What is that power? It is a power of admitting into and excluding from the societies under my care; of choosing and removing stewards, of receiving or not receiving helpers; of appointing them where, when, and how to help me, and of desiring any of them to meet me when I see good.'[2] They never dreamt of disobeying him. So great was the awe which he inspired that when the Deed of Declaration was drawn up in 1784, and Wesley selected, somewhat arbitrarily, one hundred out of one hundred and ninety-two preachers to be members of the Conference, though several murmured and thought it hard that preachers of old standing should

[1] See Tyerman's *Life of Wesley*, ii. 334.

[2] Southey, ii. 71. In 1780 Wesley wrote, 'You seem not to have well considered the rules of a helper or the rise of Methodism. It pleased God by me to awaken first my brother, then a few others, who severally desired of me as a favour to direct them in all things. I drew up a few plain rules (observe there was no Conference in being) and permitted them to join me on these conditions. Whoever, therefore, violates these conditions does *ipso facto* disjoin himself from me. This Brother Macnab has done, but he cannot see that he has done amiss. The Conference has no power at all but what I exercise through them' (the preachers).

be rejected, yet when the time came none durst oppose him. 'Many,' writes one of the malcontents, 'were averse to the deed, but had not the courage to avow their sentiments in Conference. Mr. Wesley made a speech and invited all who were of his mind to stand up. They all rose to a man.'[1]

It certainly was an extraordinary power for one man to possess: but in its exercise there was not the slightest taint of selfishness, nor yet the slightest trace that he loved power for power's sake. His own account of its rise is perfectly sincere and artless, and, it is honestly believed, perfectly true. 'The power I have,' he writes, 'I never sought; it was the unadvised, unexpected result of the work which God was pleased to work by me. I therefore suffer it till I can find some one to ease me of my burthen.' He used his power simply to promote his one great object—to make his followers better men and better citizens, happier in this life and thrice happier in the life to come. If it was a despotism it was a singularly useful and benevolent despotism, a despotism which was founded wholly and solely upon the respect which his personal character commanded. Surely if this man had been, as his ablest biographer represents him,[2] an ambitious man, he would have used his power for some personal end. He would at least have yielded to the evident desire of some of his followers and have founded a separate sect, in which he might have held a place not much inferior to that which Mahomet held among the faithful. But he spoke the truth when he said, 'So far as I know myself, I have no more concern for the reputation of Methodism than for the reputation of Prester John.'[3] When he heard of accusations being brought against him of 'shackling free-born Englishmen' and of 'doing no less than making himself a Pope,' he defended his power with an artless simplicity which was very characteristic of the man. 'If,' he said, 'you mean by arbitrary power a power which I exercise singly, without any colleague therein, this is certainly true; but I see no harm in it. Arbitrary in this sense is a very harmless word. I bear this burden merely for your sakes.' It is a defence which one could fancy an Eastern tyrant making for the most rigorous of 'paternal governments.' But Wesley was no tyrant; he had no selfish end in view; it was literally 'for their sakes' that he ruled as he did; and since he was infinitely superior to the mass of his subjects (one can use no weaker term) in point of education, learning, and good judgment, it was to their advantage that he did so.

[1] Letter of Mr. J. Hampson, jun., quoted by Rev. L. Tyerman, *Life of Wesley*, vol. iii. p. 423.

[2] Robert Southey, *passim*.

[3] In a letter to Mr. Walker, of Truro, 1756.

At any rate a Churchman may be pardoned for thinking this, for one effect of his unbounded influence was to prevent his followers from separating from the Church. His sentiments on this point were so constantly and so emphatically expressed that the only difficulty consists in selecting the most suitable specimens. Perhaps the best plan will be to quote a few passages in chronological order, written at different periods of his life, to show how unalterable his opinions were on this point, however much he might alter them in others. At the very first Conference—in 1744, only six years after his conversion—we find him declaring (for of course the dicta of Conference were simply his own dicta), 'We believe the body of our hearers will even after our death remain in the Church, unless they are thrust out. They will either be thrust out or leaven the Church.' A few years later, 'In visiting classes ask everyone, "Do you go to church as often as you did?" Set the example and immediately alter any plan that interfereth therewith. Are we not unawares, by little and little, tending to a separation from the Church? Oh, remove every tendency thereto with all diligence. Receive the Sacrament at every opportunity. Warn all against niceness in hearing, a great and prevailing evil; against calling our society a Church or the Church; against calling our preachers ministers and our houses meeting-houses: call them plain preaching-houses. Do not license yourself till you are constrained, and then not as a Dissenter, but as a Methodist preacher.' In 1766, 'We will not, we dare not, separate from the Church, for the reasons given several years ago. We are not seceders. . . . Some may say, "Our own service is public worship." Yes, in a sense, but not such as to supersede the Church service. We never designed it should. If it were designed to be instead of the Church service it would be essentially defective, for it seldom has the four grand parts of public prayer—deprecation, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving. Neither is it, even on the Lord's Day, concluded with the Lord's Supper. If the people put ours in the place of the Church service, we *hurt* them that stay with us and *ruin* them that leave us.' In 1768, 'We are, in truth, so far from being enemies to the Church that we are rather bigots to it. I dare not, like Mr. Venn, leave the parish church where I am, and go to an Independent meeting. I advise all over whom I have any influence to keep to the Church.' In 1777, in the remarkable sermon which he preached on laying the foundation of the City Road Chapel, after having given a succinct but graphic account of the rise and progress of Methodism, 'we,' he concludes, 'do not, will not, form any separate sect, but from principle remain, what we have always

been, true members of the Church of England.'[1] In 1778, 'To speak freely, I myself find more life in the Church prayers than in any formal extempore prayers of Dissenters.' In 1780, 'Having had opportunity of seeing several Churches abroad, and having deeply considered the several sorts of Dissenters at home, I am fully convinced our own Church, with all her blemishes, is nearer the Scriptural plan than any other Church in Europe.' In 1783, 'In every possible way I have advised the Methodists to keep to the Church. They that do this most prosper best in their souls. I have observed it long. If ever the Methodists in general leave the Church, I must leave them.' In 1786, 'Wherever there is any Church service I do not approve of any appointment the same hour, because I love the Church of England, and would assist, not oppose it, all I can.' In 1788, 'Still, the more I reflect the more I am convinced that the Methodists ought not to leave the Church. I judge that to lose a thousand—yea, ten thousand—of our people would be a less evil than this. "But many had much comfort in this." So they would in any *new thing*. I believe Satan himself would give them comfort therein, for he knows what the end must be. Our glory has hitherto been not to be a separate body. "*Hoc Ithacus velit.*"' And finally, within two years of his death, in his striking sermon on the ministerial office, 'In God's name stop! . . . Ye are a new phenomenon in the earth—a body of people who, being of no sect or party, are friends to all parties, and endeavour to forward all in heart-religion, in the knowledge and love of God and man. Ye yourselves were at first called in the Church of England; and though ye have and will have a thousand temptations to leave it, and set up for yourselves, regard them not; be Church of England men still; do not cast away the peculiar glory which God hath put upon you and frustrate the design of Providence, the very end for which God raised you up.'

But some years before John Wesley uttered these memorable words had he not himself done the very thing which he deprecated? Consciously and intentionally, No! a thousand times no; but virtually and as a matter of fact we must reluctantly answer, Yes. Lord Mansfield's famous dictum, 'Ordination is separation,' is unanswerable. When, in 1784, John Wesley ordained Coke and Ashbury to be 'superintendents,' and Whatcoat and Vasey to be 'elders,' in America, he to all intents and purposes crossed the Rubicon. His brother Charles regarded the

[1] To the same effect in his *Short History of Methodism* Wesley wrote, 'Those who remain with Mr. Wesley are mostly Church of England men. They love her articles, her homilies, her liturgy, her discipline, and unwillingly vary from it in any instance.'

act in that light and bitterly regretted it. How a logical mind like John Wesley's could regard it in any other it is difficult to conceive. But that he had in all sincerity persuaded himself that there was no inconsistency in it with his strong Churchmanship there can be no manner of doubt.

The true explanation of John Wesley's conduct in this matter may perhaps be found in the intensely practical character of his mind. His work in America seemed likely to come to a deadlock for want of ordained ministers. Thus we come back to the old motive. Everything must be sacrificed for the sake of his work. Some may think this was doing evil that good might come; but no such notion ever entered into John Wesley's head; his rectitude of purpose, if not the clearness of his judgment, is as conspicuous in this as in the other acts of his life.

It should also be remembered (for it serves to explain this, as well as many other apparent inconsistencies in his career) that Wesley attached very little value to the mere holding of right opinions. Orthodoxy, he thought, constituted but a very small part, if a part at all, of true religion. 'What,' he asks, 'is faith? Not an opinion nor any number of opinions, be they ever so true. A string of opinions is no more Christian faith than a string of beads is Christian holiness.' Opinions were 'feathers light as air, trifles not worth naming.' Controversy was his abhorrence; he thought 'God made practical divinity necessary, but the Devil controversial.' When he entered into controversy with Tucker in 1742, 'I now,' he wrote, 'tread an untried path with fear and trembling—fear not of my adversary, but of myself.' Just twenty years later he records with evident satisfaction that he has entirely lost his taste for controversy and his readiness in disputing, and this he takes to be a providential discharge from it. 'I am sick,' he writes on another occasion, 'of opinions; I am weary to bear them; my soul loathes this frothy food. Give me solid, substantial religion. Give me an humble, gentle lover of God and man. Whosoever thus doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven, the same is brother, and sister, and mother.' He was anxious to promote a union between all the Evangelical clergy, but it must be on the condition that the points of difference between them should not be discussed. He was quite ready to hand over his opponents to Fletcher, or Sellon, or Olivers, or anyone whom he judged strong enough to take them in hand. He prided himself on the fact that Methodism required no agreement on disputed points of doctrine among its members. 'Are you in earnest about your soul?' That was the one question that must be answered in the affirmative. 'Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? If so, then give me thine hand.'

Or, as he elsewhere expresses it, 'The sum is, One thing I know: whereas I was blind, now I see—an argument of which a peasant, a woman, a child, may feel all the force.'[1]

This almost supercilious disregard of mere orthodoxy was all very well in Wesley's days, but it would never have done in the earlier part of the century; for it tacitly assumed that the main truths of Christianity had been firmly established; and the assumption was justifiable. The work of the apologists had prepared the way for the work of the practical reformer. If the former had not done their work, the latter could not have afforded to think so lightly as he did of sound doctrine.

Feeling thus that opinions were a matter of quite secondary consideration, Wesley had no hesitation about modifying, or even totally abandoning, opinions which he found to be practically injurious.[2] He confessed, as we have seen, that he was quite wrong in his theory of the Divine origin of Episcopacy, and in his estimate of his own state of mind previous to his conversion in 1738. He very materially modified his doctrine of Christian perfection when he found it was liable to practical abuse, and appended notes to an edition of hymns in which that doctrine was too unguardedly stated.[3] He confessed his error on the subject of Christian assurance in a characteristically outspoken fashion. 'When,' he wrote in old age, 'fifty years ago, my brother Charles and I, in the simplicity of our hearts, taught the people that unless they *knew* their sins were forgiven they were under the wrath and curse of God, I marvel they did not stone us. The Methodists, I hope, know better now. We preach assurance, as we always did, as a common privilege of the children of God, but we do not enforce it under pain of damnation denounced on all who enjoy it not.' He thought it idle to discuss the question of regeneration in baptism when it was obvious that baptized persons had practically as much need

[1] See also Wesley's *Works*, vol. xii. p. 446, &c.

[2] For this reason, among others, not much has been said in this sketch about Wesley's opinions, because they were different at different stages of his life. Moreover, though Wesley was an able man and a well-read man, and could write in admirably lucid and racy language, he can by no means be ranked among theologians of the first order. He could never, for instance, have met Dr. Clarke, as Waterland did; or, to compare him with one who was brought into contact with him, he could never have written the *Serious Call*, nor have answered Tindal, as Law did.

[3] 'I retract several expressions in our hymns which imply impossibility of falling from perfection; I do not contend for the term "sinless," though I do not object against it.' And in a sermon on the text, 'In many things we offend all,' 'We are all liable to be mistaken, both in speculation and practice,' &c. 'Christian perfection certainly does admit of degrees,' &c.

as heathens to be born again.[1] It was quite as much their fondness for controversy as their rigid Calvinism which put him out of love with the Scotch and made him feel that he could do no good among them.[2]

In accounting for Wesley's repugnance to religious controversy it should not be forgotten that in the latter half of his life controversial divinity had sunk to a low ebb, at least among those with whom he would most naturally come into contact. A man of his logical mind, clear common sense, and extensive reading could hardly fail to be disgusted with much that passed for religious literature. He shrunk with a horror which is almost amusing from the task of reviewing religious publications in the 'Arminian Magazine.' 'I would not,' he said, 'read all the religious books that are now published for the whole world.' He protested against 'what were vulgarly called Gospel sermons.' 'The term,' he says, 'has now become a mere cant word. I wish none of our Society would use it. It has no determinate meaning. Let but a pert, self-sufficient animal that has neither sense nor grace bawl out something about Christ and His blood, or justification by faith, and his hearers cry out, "What a fine Gospel sermon!"'[3]

In fact, Wesley in his later years was very much alienated from what was called 'the religious world.' He had received some of his severest wounds in the house of his friends. Not Warburton, nor Lavington, nor Gibson had spoken and written such hard things against him as many of the most decidedly Evangelical clergy. He clung to the poor and unlettered, not, as it has been asserted, because he desired to be a sort of Pope among them, but because he really felt that his work was there less hampered by the disturbing influence of conflicting opinions, which were barren of practical effects upon the life. As usual, he made no secret whatever of his preference. A nobleman accustomed to flattery on all sides must have been rather taken aback on the receipt of this very outspoken rebuff from plain

[1] But, as a staunch Churchman, he agreed with the Baptismal Service. In his *Treatise on Baptism* he writes, 'Regeneration, which our Church in so many places ascribes to baptism, is more than barely being admitted into the Church. By water we are regenerated or born again; a principle of grace is infused which will not be wholly taken away unless we quench the Spirit of God by long-continued wickedness.' The same sentiments are expressed in his sermon on the 'New Birth.'

[2] See *inter alia*, T. Somerville's *My Own Life and Times* (1741–1841). 'He [J. Wesley] had attended, he told me, some of the most interesting debates at the General Assembly, which he liked "very ill indeed," saying there was too much heat,' &c., pp. 253–4.

[3] See Tyerman, iii. 278.

John Wesley : 'To speak the rough truth, I do not desire any intercourse with any persons of quality in England. They can do me no good, and I fear I can do none to them.'[1] One can fancy the amazement of Lady Huntingdon, who exacted and received no small amount of homage from her protégés, when she received a letter from John Wesley so different from those which were usually addressed to her. 'My Lady, for a considerable time I have had it in my mind to write a few lines to your ladyship, though I cannot learn that your ladyship has ever enquired whether I was living or dead. By the mercy of God I am still alive and following the work to which He has called me, although without any help, even in the most trying times, from those I might have expected it from. Their voice seemed to be rather, *Down with him! down, even to the ground!* I mean (for I use no ceremony or circumlocution) Mr. Madan, Haweis, Berridge, and (I am sorry to say) Whitefield.' Had it been to an earl instead of a countess the letter would probably have been rougher still ; but John Wesley was a thorough gentleman in every sense of the word, and could not insult a female—only if the female had been plain Sarah Ryan instead of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, she would have had more chance of being treated with deference ; for Wesley positively disliked the rich and noble. 'In most genteel religious people,' he said, 'there is so strange a mixture that I have seldom much confidence in them. But I love the poor ; in many of them I find pure, genuine grace, unmixed with paint, folly, and affectation.' And again, ''Tis well a few of the rich and noble are called. May God increase the number. But I should rejoice, were it the will of God, if it were done by the ministry of others. If I might choose, I would still, as hitherto, preach the Gospel to the poor.' He had the lowest opinion both of the intellectual and moral character of the higher classes. 'Oh ! how hard it is,' he once exclaimed, 'to be shallow enough for a polite audience !' And on another occasion he records with some bitterness of a rich congregation to which he had preached at Whitehaven, 'They all behaved with as much decency as if they had been colliers.' 'I have found,' he says again, 'some of the uneducated poor who have exquisite taste and sentiment, and many, very many, of the rich who have scarcely any at all.' He wrote to Fletcher, in what one must call an unprovoked strain of rudeness, on the danger of his conversing with the 'genteel Methodists.' Indeed, the leading members of the Evangelical school—Lady Huntingdon, Sir Richard and Rowland Hill, Venn, Romaine, and others—were,

[1] Southey, i. 301, &c.

quite apart from their Calvinism, never cordially in harmony with John Wesley. As years went on Wesley must have felt himself more and more a lonely man so far as his equals were concerned, for in point of breeding and culture he was fully the equal of the very best. It must not be supposed that Wesley did not feel this isolation. There is a sadness about the strain in which he wrote to Benson in 1770. 'Whatever I say, it will be all one. They will find fault because I say it. There is implicit envy at my power (so called) and jealousy therefrom.' Wesley was not demonstrative, but he was a man of strong affections and acute feelings, and he felt his loneliness, and more so than ever after the death of his brother Charles. There is a touching story that a fortnight after the death of the latter Wesley was giving out in chapel his dead brother's magnificent hymn,

Come, O thou traveller unknown,

and when he came to the lines,

My company before is gone,
And I am left alone with thee,

the old man (then in his eighty-fourth year) burst into tears and hid his face in his hands.

One feature in Wesley's character must be carefully noted by all who would form a fair estimate of him. If it was a weakness, and one which frequently led him into serious practical mistakes, it was at any rate an amiable weakness—a fault which was very near akin to a virtue. A guileless trustfulness of his fellow-men, who often proved very unworthy of his confidence, and, akin to this, a credulity, a readiness to believe the marvellous, tinged his whole career. 'My brother,' said Charles Wesley, 'was, I think, born for the benefit of knaves.'[1] It is in the light of this quality that we must interpret many important events of his life. His relations with the other sex were notoriously unfortunate; not a breath of scandal was ever uttered against him; and the mere fact that it was not is a convincing proof, if any were needed, of the spotless purity of his life; for it is difficult to conceive conduct more injudicious than his was. The story of his relationship with Sophia Causton, Grace Murray, Sarah Ryan, and last, but not least, the widow Vazeille, his termagant wife, need not here be repeated. In the case of any other man scandal would

[1] So said Charles (see Jackson's *Life of C. Wesley*). John, however, gave a different account. 'My brother,' he said to John Pawson, 'suspects everybody, and he is continually imposed upon; but I suspect nobody, and I am never imposed upon.'

often have been busy; but Wesley was above suspicion. His conduct was put down to the right cause—viz. a perfect guilelessness and simplicity of nature. The same tone of mind led him to take men as well as women too much at their own estimates. He was quite ready to believe those who said that they had attained the summit of Christian perfection,[1] though, with characteristic humility, he never professed to have attained it himself. He was far more ready than either his brother Charles or Whitefield to see in the physical symptoms which attended the early movement of Methodism the hand of God; but, in justice to him, it should be added that he was no less ready than they were to check them when in any case he was convinced of their imposture. The same spirit led him to attribute to the immediate interposition of Providence events which might have been more reasonably attributed to ordinary causes; this laid him open to the merciless attacks of Bishops Lavington and Warburton. The same spirit led him to the superstitious and objectionable practice of having recourse to the 'Sortes Biblicæ,' by which folly he was more than once misled against his own better judgment; the same spirit tempted him to lend far too eager an ear to tales of witchcraft and magic.[2]

But, after all, these weaknesses detract but little from the greatness and nothing from the goodness of John Wesley. He stands pre-eminent among the worthies who originated and conducted the revival of practical religion which took place in the last century. In particular points he was surpassed by one or other of his fellow-workers. In preaching power he was not equal to Whitefield; in saintliness of character he was surpassed by Fletcher; in poetical talent he was inferior to his brother; in solid learning he was, perhaps, not equal to his friend and disciple Adam Clarke. But no one man combined *all* these characteristics in so remarkable a degree as John Wesley; and he possessed others besides these which were all his own. He was a born ruler of men; the powers which under different conditions would have made him 'a heaven-born statesman' he dedicated

[1] 'I seldom,' he wrote to Fletcher in 1768, 'find it profitable for *me* to converse with any who are not athirst for perfection and big with the earnest expectation of receiving it every moment.'—Tyerman, iii. 4.

[2] 'With my latest breath will I bear testimony against giving up to infidels one great proof of the unseen world; I mean that of witchcraft and apparitions, confirmed by the testimony of all ages.'—Id. 11. See also T. Somerville's *My own Life and Times*, p. 254. 'On my asking him if he had seen Farmer's *Essays on Demoniacs*, then recently published, I recollect his answer was, "Nay, sir, I shall never open that book. Why should a man attend to arguments against possessions of the Devil, who has seen so many of them as I have?"'

to still nobler and more useful purposes. Among the poor at least he was always appreciated at his full worth. And one is thankful to find that towards the end of his life his character began to be better understood and respected by worthy men who could not entirely identify themselves with the Evangelical movement. There is a pleasing story that Wesley met Bishop Lowth at dinner in 1777, when the learned Bishop refused to sit above Wesley at table, saying, 'Mr. Wesley, may I be found sitting at your feet in another world.' When Wesley declined to take precedence the Bishop asked him as a favour to sit above him, as he was deaf and desired not to lose a sentence of Mr. Wesley's conversation. Wesley, though, as we have seen, he had no partiality for the great, fully appreciated this courtesy, and recorded in his journal, 'Dined with Lowth, Bishop of London. His whole behaviour was worthy of a Christian bishop—easy, affable, and courteous—and yet all his conversation spoke the dignity which was suitable to his character.'[1] In 1782, at Exeter, Wesley dined with the Bishop in his palace, five other clergy being present.[2] In 1784, at Whitehaven, Wesley 'had all the Church ministers to hear him, and most of the gentry of the town.'[3]

Still to the last Wesley had the mortification of seeing his work occasionally thwarted by that Church which he loved so dearly. One of the last letters which he wrote was a manly appeal to the Bishop of Lincoln on the subject.

A few months later the noble old man was at rest from his labours. When the clergyman who officiated at his funeral came to the words, 'Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God to take unto Himself the soul of our dear *brother* here departed,' he substituted the word 'father' for 'brother,' and the vast multitude burst into tears. It remained for the present generation to do justice to his memory by giving a place in our Christian Walhalla among the great dead to one who was certainly among the greatest of his day.[4]

[1] Tyerman, iii. 252. It should not be forgotten that at the beginning as well as at the end of their career the Wesleys met with great consideration from some of the bishops. Charles Wesley speaks in the very highest terms of the 'affectionate' way in which Archbishop Potter treated him and his brother, and John seems never to have forgotten the advice which this 'great and good man' (as he calls him) gave him—'not to spend his time and strength in disputing about things of a disputable nature, but in testifying against open vice and promoting real holiness.'

[2] Id. 384. [3] Id. 411.

[4] Mr. Curteis (*Bampton Lectures* for 1871, p. 382) calls Wesley 'the purest, noblest, most saintly clergyman of the eighteenth century, whose whole life was passed in the sincere and loyal effort to do good.'

The next great leader of the early Evangelical movement who claims our attention is *George Whitefield* (1714–1770). Whitefield, like Wesley, appears from first to last to have been actuated by one pure and disinterested motive—the desire to do as much good as he could in the world, and to bring as many souls as possible into the Redeemer's kingdom. But, except in this one grand point of resemblance, before which all points of difference sink into insignificance, it would be difficult to conceive two men whose characters and training were more different than those of Wesley and Whitefield.[1] Instead of the calm and cultured retirement of Epworth Rectory, Whitefield was brought up amidst the vulgar bustle of a country town inn. His position was not very much improved when he exchanged the drawer's apron at the 'Bell Inn,' Gloucester, for the degrading badge of a servitor at Pembroke College, Oxford. After two or three years' experience in this scarcely less menial capacity than that which he had filled at home, he was at once launched into the sea of life, and found himself, at the age of twenty-two, with hardly any intellectual or moral discipline, without having acquired any taste for study, without having ever had the benefit of associating on anything like terms of equality with men of intellect or refinement, suddenly elevated to a degree of notoriety which few have attained. Scarcely one man in a thousand could have passed through such a transformation without being spoiled. But Whitefield's was too noble a spirit to be easily spoiled. Nature had given him a loving, generous, unselfish disposition, and Divine grace had sanctified and elevated his naturally amiable qualities and given him others which nature can never bestow. He went forth into the world filled with one burning desire—the desire of doing good to his fellow-men and of extending the kingdom of his Divine Master.

It is needless here to repeat the story of the marvellous effects produced by his preaching. Nothing like it had ever been seen in England before. Ten thousand—twenty thousand—hearers hung breathless upon the preacher's words. Rough colliers, who had been a terror to their neighbourhood, wept until the tears made white gutters down their cheeks—black as they came from the colliery—and, what is still more to the purpose, changed their whole manner of life and became sober, God-fearing citizens in consequence of what they heard; sceptical philosophers listened respectfully, if not to much purpose, to one who hardly knew what philosophy meant; fine gentlemen came to hear one who,

[1] This passage on the contrast between Wesley and Whitefield was written before the author had read Tyerman's *Life of Whitefield*; a similar contrast will be found in that work, vol. i. p. 12.

in the conventional sense of the term, had very little of the gentleman about him; shrewd statesmen, who had a very keen appreciation of the value of money, were induced by the orator to give first copper, then silver, then gold, and then to borrow from their friends when they had emptied their own pockets.

What was the secret of his fascination? His printed sermons which have come down to us are certainly disappointing.[1] They are meagre compositions enough, feeble in thought and badly expressed; and what is known of Whitefield's mental powers would hardly lead us to expect them to be anything else. But it is scarcely necessary to remark that to judge of the effects of any address delivered by the way in which it reads is misleading; and it should also be remembered that what would sound to us mere truisms were new truths to the majority of those to whom Whitefield preached. A man of simple, earnest, loving spirit, utterly devoid of self-consciousness and filled with only one thought —how best to recommend the religion which he loves—may produce a great effect without much theological learning. Such a spirit Whitefield had, if any man ever had. Moreover, if the first qualification of an orator be action, the second action, and the third action, Whitefield was undoubtedly an orator. A fine presence, attractive features, and a magnificent voice which could make itself heard at an almost incredible distance, and which he seems to have known perfectly well how to modulate, all tended to heighten the effect of his sermons. As to the matter of them, there was at least one point in which Whitefield was not deficient. He had the descriptive power in a very remarkable degree.

If it were not that the expression conveyed an idea of unreality—the very last idea that should be associated with Whitefield's preaching—one might say that he had a good eye for dramatic effect. On a grassy knoll at Kingswood; in the midst of 'Vanity Fair' at Basingstoke or Moorfields, where the very contrast of all the surroundings would add impressiveness to the preacher's words; in Hyde Park at midnight, in darkness which might be felt, when men's hearts were panic-stricken at the prospect of the approaching earthquake, which was to be the precursor of the end of the world; on Hampton Common, surrounded by twelve thousand people, collected to see a man hung in chains—the scenery would all lend effect to the great preacher's utterances. Outdoor preaching was what he loved best. He felt 'cribbed, cabined, and confined' within any walls. 'Mounts,' he said, 'are the best pulpits, and the heavens the best sounding-boards.' 'I always find I have most power when I speak in the

[1] For some well-selected specimens of Whitefield's sermons see Tyerman's *Life of Whitefield*, vol. i. pp. 297–304, and ii. 567, &c.

open air—a proof to me that God is pleased with this way of preaching.'[1] · Every one hath his proper gift. Field-preaching is my plan. In this I am carried as on eagle's wings. God makes way for me everywhere.'[2]

In dwelling upon these secondary causes of Whitefield's success as a preacher it is by no means intended to lose sight of the great First Cause. God, who can make the weak things of this world to confound the mighty, could and did work for the revival of religion by this weak instrument. But God works through human agencies ; and it is no derogation to the power of His grace, but simply tracing out the laws by which that grace works, when we note the human and natural agencies which all contributed to lend a charm to Whitefield's preaching. The difficulty of accounting for that charm is not so great as would at first sight appear. Indeed, immeasurably superior as Wesley's printed sermons are to Whitefield's in depth of thought, closeness of reasoning, and purity of diction, it is more difficult to explain the *excitement* which the older and far abler man produced than to explain that which attended the younger man's oratory. For Wesley—if we may judge from his printed sermons—carefully eschewed everything that would be called in the present day 'sensational.' Plain, downright common sense, expressed in admirably chosen but studiously simple language, formed the staple of his preaching. One can quite well understand anyone being convinced and edified by such discourses, but there is nothing in them which is apparently calculated to produce the extraordinary excitement which, in a second degree only to Whitefield, Wesley did in fact arouse.

Preaching was Whitefield's great work in life,—and his work was also his pleasure. 'O that I could fly from pole to pole,' he exclaimed, 'preaching the everlasting Gospel.' When he is ill, he trusts that preaching will soon cure him again. 'This,' he says, 'is my grand Catholicon. O that I may drop and die in my blessed Master's work.' His wish was almost literally fulfilled. When his strength was failing him, when he was worn out before his time in his Master's work, he lamented that he was 'reduced to the short allowance of one sermon a day, and three on Sundays.'[3] He preached when he was literally a dying man. His other work scarcely claims a passing notice in a short sketch like the present, especially as his peculiar opinions and his

[1] *Life and Times of the Rev. G. Whitefield*, by Robert Philip, p. 130, &c.

[2] Whitefield's *Letters*; a Select Collection written to his Intimate Friends and Persons of Distinction in England, Scotland, Ireland, and America, from 1734 to 1770, vol. i. p. 277, &c.

[3] See Whitefield's *Letters* (*ut supra*), *passim*.

relationship with the Wesleys and others will again come under our notice in connection with the Calvinistic controversy. With the exception of letters to his friends and followers, and the inevitable journal (almost every member of the Evangelical school in the last century kept a journal), he wrote comparatively little; and what he did write, certainly need not cause us to regret that he wrote no more. On one of his voyages from America, Whitefield employed his leisure in abridging and gospelising Law's 'Serious Call.' Happily the work does not appear to have been finished; at any rate, it was not given to the world. Law's great work would certainly bear 'gospelising,' but Whitefield was not the man to do it. William Law improved by George Whitefield would be something like William Shakspeare improved by Colley Cibber. But the incident suggests the very different qualities which are required for the preacher and the writer. What was the character of Law's preaching we do not know, except from one sermon preached in his youth; but we may safely assume that he could never have produced the effects which Whitefield did.[1] On the other hand, one trembles at the very thought of Whitefield meddling with Law's masterpiece, for he certainly could not have touched it without spoiling it.

Whitefield's Orphan House in Georgia was his hobby; it was only one out of a thousand instances of his benevolence; but his enthusiastic efforts in behalf of it hardly form a part of the Evangelical revival, and therefore need not be dwelt upon.

The individuality of *Charles Wesley* (1708–1788), the sweet psalmist of Methodism, is perhaps in some danger of being merged in that of his more distinguished brother. And yet he had a very decided character of his own; he would have been singularly unlike the Wesley family if he had not. Charles Wesley was by no means the mere *fidus Achates*, or man Friday, of his brother John. Quite apart from his poetry, the effects of which upon the early Methodist movement it would be difficult to exaggerate, he played a most important part in the revival. As a preacher, he was almost as energetic as John; and before his marriage he was almost as effective an itinerant. His elder brother always spoke of the work which was being done as their joint work; 'my brother and I' is the expression he constantly used in describing it.[2]

As a general rule, the two brothers acted in complete harmony; but differences occurred sometimes, and, when they did,

[1] Even Warburton owned, 'of Whitefield's oratorical powers, and their astonishing influence on the minds of thousands, there can be no doubt. They are of a high order.'—*Life of Lady Huntingdon*, i. 450.

[2] See *Memoirs of the Rev. C. Wesley*, by Thomas Jackson, *passim*.

Charles Wesley showed that he had a very decided will of his own; and he could generally make it felt. For instance, in 1744, when the Wesleys were most unreasonably suspected of inclining to Popery, and of favouring the Pretender, John Wesley wrote an address to the king, 'in the name of the Methodists;' but it was laid aside because Charles Wesley objected to any act which would seem to constitute them a sect, or at least would seem to allow that they were a body distinct from the National Church. Again, from the first, Charles Wesley looked with great suspicion on the bodily excitement which attended his brother's preaching, and it is more than probable that he helped to modify John Wesley's opinions on this subject. On the ordination question, Charles Wesley felt very strongly; he never fell in with his brother's views, but vehemently disapproved of his whole conduct in the matter. He would probably have interfered still more actively, but for some years before the ordination question arose he had almost ceased to itinerate, partly, Mr. Tyerman thinks, because he was married, and partly because of the feeling in many societies, and especially among many preachers, against the Church. In 1753, when John Wesley was dangerously ill, Charles Wesley distinctly told the societies that he neither could nor would stand in his brother's place, if it pleased God to take him, for he had neither a body, nor a mind, nor talents, nor grace for it. In 1779, he wrote to his brother in terms as peremptory as John himself was wont to use, and such as few others would have dared to employ in addressing the founder of Methodism. 'The preachers,' he writes,[1] 'do not love the Church of England. When we are gone, a separation is inevitable. Do you not wish to keep as many good people in the Church as you can? Something might be done now to save the remainder, if only you had resolution, and would stand by me as firmly as I will stand by you. Consider what you are bound to do as a clergyman, and what you do, do quickly.' It has been already stated that Charles was, if possible, even more attached to the Church than John. John, on his part, fully felt the need of his brother's help. In 1768, he wrote to him, 'I am at my wits' end with regard to two things: the Church and Christian perfection. Unless both you and I stand in the gap in good earnest, the Methodists will drop them both. Talking will not avail, we must *do*, or be borne away. "Age, vir esto! nervos intende tuos."' On another occasion, John rescued his brother from a dangerous tendency which he showed towards the stillness of the Moravians. He wrote to him, 'The poison is in you, fair words have stolen

[1] See Tyerman's *Life of John Wesley*, vol. iii. p. 310.

away your heart;' and made this characteristic entry in his journal:—'The Philistines are upon thee, Samson; but the Lord is not departed from thee; He shall strengthen thee yet again, and thou shalt be avenged for the loss of thine eyes.'

There is an interesting letter from Whitefield to Charles Wesley, dated December 22, 1752, from which it appears that there was a threatened rupture between the two brothers, the cause of which we do not know.[1] 'I have read and pondered your kind letter with a degree of solemnity of spirit. What shall I say? Really I can scarce tell. The connection between you and your brother hath been so close and continued, and your attachment so necessary to him to keep up his interest, that I could not willingly for the world do or say anything that may separate such friends. I cannot help thinking that he is still jealous of me and my proceedings; but I thank God I am quite easy about it.'[2] The last sentence is characteristically injudicious, if Whitefield desired, as undoubtedly he did, to heal the breach; but the letter is valuable as showing that, in the opinion of Whitefield, who must have known as much about the matter as anyone, the co-operation of the two brothers was essential to their joint work.

Indeed, if for no other reason, Charles Wesley occupies a most important place in the history of early Methodism, as forming the connecting link between John Wesley and Whitefield. In October, 1749, he wrote, 'George Whitefield and my brother and I are one; a threefold cord which shall no more be broken;' but he does not add, as he might have done, that he himself was the means by which the union was effected. The contrast between Whitefield and John Wesley, in character, tastes, culture, &c., was so very great that, quite apart from their doctrinal differences, there could probably never have been any real intimacy between them, had there not been some common friend who had in his character some points of contact

[1] This was written before the author had read Mr. Tyerman's *Life of Whitefield*; indeed, before that life was published. Mr. Tyerman informs us that the dispute arose because some of the preachers informed Wesley that his brother Charles did not enforce discipline so strictly as himself, and that Charles agreed with Whitefield 'touching perseverance, at least, if not predestination too.'—Tyerman's *Life of Whitefield*, ii. 288.

[2] Gledstone's *Life of Whitefield*, p. 439, but surely Mr. Gledstone is scarcely justified in adding quite gratuitously, 'John Wesley was not a man with whom it was easy to be on good terms; his lofty claims must have fretted his brother and created uneasiness.' Charles Wesley was quite equal to cope with John if he had preferred any 'lofty claims' beyond those which an elder brother might naturally have upon a younger. But, in point of fact, there is no trace of any such rivalry between the brothers.

with both. That common friend was Charles Wesley. Full of sterling common sense, highly cultured and refined, possessed of strong reasoning powers, and well read like his brother, he was impulsive, demonstrative in his feelings, and very tender-hearted like Whitefield. Whitefield never quite appreciated John Wesley, but Charles he loved dearly, and so did John. As we have seen, the one solitary instance of the strong man's breaking down was on the death of his brother. And Charles Wesley was thoroughly worthy of every good man's love. His fame (except as a poet) has been somewhat overshadowed by the still greater renown of his brother, but he contributed his full share towards the success of the Evangelical Revival.

If John Wesley was the great leader and organiser, Charles Wesley the great poet, and George Whitefield the great preacher of Methodism, the highest type of saintliness which it produced was unquestionably *John Fletcher* (1729-1785). Never, perhaps, since the rise of Christianity has the mind which was in Christ Jesus been more faithfully copied than it was in the Vicar of Madeley. To say that he was a good Christian is saying too little. He was more than Christian, he was Christlike. It is said that Voltaire, when challenged to produce a character as perfect as that of Jesus Christ, at once mentioned Fletcher of Madeley; and if the comparison between the God-man and any child of Adam were in any case admissible, it would be difficult to find one with whom it could be instituted with less appearance of blasphemy than this excellent man. Fletcher was a Swiss by birth and education; and to the last he showed traces of his foreign origin. But England can claim the credit of having formed his spiritual character. Soon after his settlement in England as tutor to the sons of Mr. Hill of Terne Hall, he became attracted by the Methodist movement, which had then (1752) become a force in the country, and in 1753 he was admitted into Holy Orders. The account of his appointment to the living of Madeley presents a very unusual phenomenon in the eighteenth century. His patron, Mr. Hill, offered him the living of Dunham, 'where the population was small, the income good, and the village situated in the midst of a fine sporting country.' These were no recommendations in the eyes of Fletcher, and he declined the living on the ground that the income was too large and the population too small. Madeley had the advantage of having only half the income and double the population of Dunham. On being asked whether he would accept Madeley if the vicar of that parish would consent to exchange it for Dunham, Fletcher gladly embraced the offer. As the Vicar of Madeley had naturally no objection to so advan-

tageous an exchange, Fletcher was instituted to the cure of the large Shropshire village, in which he spent a quarter of a century. There is no need to record his apostolical labours in this humble sphere of duty. Madeley was a rough parish, full of colliers; but there was also a sprinkling of resident gentry. Like his friend John Wesley, Fletcher found more fruits of his work among the poor than among the gentry. But none, whether rich or poor, could resist the attractions of this saintly man. In 1772 he addressed to the principal inhabitants of the Parish of Madeley 'An appeal to matter of fact and common sense,' the dedication of which is so characteristic that it is worth quoting in full. 'Gentlemen,' writes the vicar, 'you are no less entitled to my private labours than the inferior class of my parishioners. As you do not choose to partake with them of my evening instructions, I take the liberty to present you with some of my morning meditations. May these well-meant efforts of my pen be more acceptable to you than those of my tongue! And may you carefully read in your closets what you have perhaps inattentively heard in the church! I appeal to the Searcher of hearts, that I had rather impart truth than receive tithes. You kindly bestow the latter upon me; grant me the satisfaction of seeing you receive favourably the former from, gentlemen, your affectionate minister and obedient servant, J. Fletcher.'

When Lady Huntingdon founded her college for the training of ministers at Trevecca, she invited Fletcher to undertake a sort of general superintendence over it. This Fletcher undertook without fee or reward—not, of course, with the intention of residing there, for he had no sympathy with the bad custom of non-residence which was only too common in his day. He was simply to visit the college as frequently as he could; 'and,' writes Dr. Benson, the first head-master, 'he was received as an angel of God.' 'It is not possible,' he adds, 'for me to describe the veneration in which we all held him. Like Elijah in the schools of the Prophets, he was revered, he was loved, he was almost adored. My heart kindles while I write. Here it was that I saw, shall I say an angel in human flesh?—I should not far exceed the truth if I said so'—and much more to the same effect. It was the same wherever Fletcher went; the impression he made was extraordinary; language seems to fail those who tried to describe it. 'I went,' said one who visited him in an illness (he was always delicate), 'to see a man that had one foot in the grave, but I found a man that had one foot in heaven.'[1] 'Sir,' said Mr. Venn to one who asked him his opinion of

[1] See *Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon*, by a member of the houses of Shirley and Hastings, vol. ii. pp. 71, 72.

Fletcher, 'he was a *luminary* —a luminary did I say?—he was a *sun*! I have known all the great men for these fifty years, but none like him.' John Wesley was of the same opinion; in Fletcher he saw realised in the highest degree all that he meant by 'Christian Perfection.' For some time he hesitated to write a description of this 'great man,' 'judging that only an Apelles was proper to paint an Alexander;' but at length he published his well known sermon on the significant text, 'Mark the perfect man.' &c. (Ps. xxxvii. 37), which he concluded with this striking testimony to the unequalled character of his friend: 'I was intimately acquainted with him for above thirty years; I conversed with him morning, noon, and night without the least reserve, during a journey of many hundred miles; and in all that time I never heard him speak one improper word, nor saw him do an improper action. To conclude: many exemplary men have I known, holy in heart and life, within fourscore years, but one equal to him I have not known—one so inwardly and outwardly devoted to God. So unblamable a character in every respect I have not found either in Europe or America; and I scarce expect to find another such on this side of eternity.' Fletcher, on his part, was one of the few parish clergymen who to the end thoroughly appreciated John Wesley. He thought it 'shameful that no clergyman should join Wesley to keep in the Church the work God had enabled him to carry on therein;' and he was half-inclined to join him as his deacon, 'not,' he adds with genuine modesty, 'with any view of presiding over the Methodists after you, but to ease you a little in your old age, and to be in the way of receiving, perhaps doing, more good.' Wesley was very anxious that Fletcher should be his successor, and proposed it to him in a characteristic letter; but Fletcher declined the office, and had he accepted, the plan could never have been carried out, for the hale old man survived his younger friend several years. The last few years of Fletcher's life were cheered by the companionship of one to whom no higher praise can be awarded than to say that she was worthy of being Fletcher's wife. Next to Susanna Wesley herself, Mrs. Fletcher stands pre-eminent among the heroines of Methodism. In 1785 the saint entered into his everlasting rest, dying in harness at his beloved Madeley. His death-bed scene is too sacred to be transferred to these pages.

Indeed, there is something almost unearthly about the whole of this man's career. He is an object in some respects rather for admiration than for imitation. He could do and say things which other men could not without some sort of unreality. John Wesley, with his usual good sense, warns his readers of this in reference to one particular habit, viz. 'the facility of raising

useful observations from the most trifling incidents.' 'In him,' he says, 'it partly resulted from nature, and was partly a supernatural gift. But what was becoming and graceful in Mr. Fletcher would be disgustful almost in any other.' An ordinary Christian, for example, who, when he was having his likeness taken, should exhort 'the limner, and all that were in the room, not only to get the outlines drawn, but the colourings also of the image of Jesus on their hearts;' who, 'when ordered to be let blood,' should, 'while his blood was running into the cup, take occasion to expatiate on the precious blood-shedding of the Lamb of God;' who should tell his cook 'to stir up the fire of divine love in her soul,' and intreat his housemaid 'to sweep every corner in her heart;' who, when he received a present of a new coat, should, in thanking the donor, draw a minute and elaborate contrast between the broadcloth and the robe of Christ's righteousness--would run the risk of making not only himself, but the sacred subjects which he desired to recommend, ridiculous. Unfortunately there were not a few, both in Fletcher's day and subsequently, who did fall into this error, and, with the very best intentions, dragged the most solemn truths through the dirt. Fletcher, besides being so heavenly-minded that what would seem forced and strained in others seemed perfectly natural in him, was also a man of cultivated understanding and (with occasional exceptions) of refined and delicate taste; but in this matter he was a dangerous model to follow. Who but Fletcher, for instance, could, without savouring of irreverence or even blasphemy, when offering some ordinary refreshment to his friends, have accompanied it with the words, 'The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ,' &c., and 'The Blood of our Lord,' &c.? But extraordinary as was the spiritual-mindedness of this man of God, he could, without an effort, descend to earthly matters on occasion. One of the most beautiful traits of his character was illustrated on one of these occasions. He had done the Government good service by writing on the American Rebellion, and Lord Dartmouth was commissioned to ask him whether any preferment would be acceptable to him. 'I want nothing,' answered the simple-hearted Christian, 'but more grace.' His love of children was another touching characteristic of Fletcher. 'The birds of my fine wood,' he wrote to a friend, 'have almost done singing; but I have met with a parcel of children whose hearts seem turned towards singing the praises of God, and we sing every day from four to five. Help us by your prayers.'

Having described the leader, the orator, the poet, and the saint of Methodism, it still remains to say something about the patroness of the movement. Methodism won its chief triumphs

among the poor and lower middle classes. The upper classes, though a revival of religion was sorely needed among them, were not perceptibly affected. To promote this desirable object, *Selina, Countess of Huntingdon* (1707–1791), sacrificed her time, her energies, her money, and her social reputation.

It is impossible to help respecting a lady whose whole life was devoted to so noble an aim. In one sense she gave up more than any of the promoters of Methodism had the opportunity of doing. For, in the first place, she had more to give up ; and, in the second, it required more moral courage than the rest were called upon to exercise to run counter to all the prejudices of the class to which she naturally belonged. Both by birth and by marriage she was connected with some of the noblest families in the kingdom, and, by general confession, religion was at a very low ebb among the nobility in Lady Huntingdon's day. The prominent part which she took in the Evangelical Revival exposed her to that contempt and ridicule from her own order which are to many harder to bear than actual persecution. To the credit, however, of the nobility, it must be added that most of them learnt to respect Lady Huntingdon's character and motives, though they could not be persuaded to embrace her opinions. With a few exceptions, chiefly among her own sex, Lady Huntingdon was not very successful in her attempts to affect, to any practical purpose, the class to which she belonged ; but she was marvellously successful in persuading the most distinguished persons in the intellectual as well as the social world to come and hear her favourite preachers. No ball or masquerade brought together more brilliant assemblies than those which met in her drawing-room at Chelsea, or her chapel at Bath, or in the Tabernacle itself, to hear Whitefield and others preach. To enumerate the company would be to enumerate the most illustrious men and women of the day. The Earl of Chatham, Lord North, the Earl of Sandwich, Bubb Doddington, George Selwyn, Charles Townshend, Horace Walpole, Lord Camden, Lord Northington, the Earl of Chesterfield, Viscount Bolingbroke, the Earl of Bath, Frederick, Prince of Wales, the Duke of Cumberland, John, Lord Hervey, the Duke of Bolton, the Duke of Grafton, Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, the Duchess of Buckingham, Lady Townshend, were at different times among the hearers.[1] Horace Walpole tells us that in 1766 it was quite the rage at Bath among persons in high life to form parties to hear the different preachers who 'supplied' the chapel.

[1] For a fuller list of the 'brilliant assemblies' which Lady Huntingdon gathered together, see Tyerman's *Life of Whitefield*, ii. 209, &c., and 407, &c. Mr. Tyerman takes a more hopeful view of the good that was done among these classes than is taken in the text.

The bishops themselves did not disdain to attend 'incognito;' curtained seats were placed immediately inside the door, where the prelates were smuggled in; and this was wittily called 'Nicodemus's corner.' The Duchess of Buckingham accepted an invitation from Lady Huntingdon to attend her chapel at Bath in the following words: 'I thank your ladyship for the information concerning the Methodist preachers; their doctrines are most repulsive and strongly tinctured with impertinence and disrespect towards their superiors, in perpetually endeavouring to level all ranks and do away with all distinctions. It is monstrous to be told you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl on the earth. This is highly offensive and insulting; and I cannot but wonder that your ladyship should relish any sentiments so much at variance with high rank and good breeding. I shall be most happy to come and hear your favourite preacher.'[1] Horace Walpole (who, however, is not always to be trusted when he is writing on religious matters) wrote to Sir Horace Mann, March 23, 1749: 'Methodism is more fashionable than anything but brag; the women play very deep at both—as deep, it is much suspected, as the Roman matrons did at the mysteries of Bona Dea. If gracious Anne were alive she would make an admirable defendress of the new faith, and would build fifty more churches for female proselytes.'[2] It is fair to add, however, that some of the ablest among the hearers were the most impressed. David Hume's opinion of Whitefield's preaching has already been noticed. David Garrick[3] was certainly not disposed to ridicule it. There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of Lord Bolingbroke's sentiments expressed in a private letter to the Earl of Marchmont: 'I hope you heard from me by myself, as well as of me by Mr. Whitefield. This apostolical person preached some time ago at Lady Huntingdon's, and I should have been curious to hear him. Nothing kept me from going but an imagination that there was to be a select auditory. That saint, our friend Chesterfield, was there, and I heard from him an extreme good account of the sermon.'[4] Lord Bolingbroke afterwards did hear Whitefield, and said to Lady Huntingdon: 'You may command my pen when you will; it shall be drawn in your service. For,

[1] See Gledstone's *Life of Whitefield*, p. 304.

[2] *Letters of Horace Walpole*, from 1744 to 1753.

[3] Not so Garrick's brother actor, Foote. The 'Minor' was a cruel attack upon Whitefield. Foote spoke an epilogue in the character of Whitefield, 'whom he dressed and imitated to the life.'—(See Forster's *Essays*, 'Samuel Foote.') Foote defended himself on the ground that Whitefield was 'ever profaning the name of God with blasphemous nonsense,' &c.

[4] *Marchmont Papers*, ii. 377.

admitting the Bible to be true, I shall have little apprehension of maintaining the doctrines of predestination and grace against all your revilers.' We do not hear that this new defender of the faith *did* employ his pen in Lady Huntingdon's service, and few perhaps will regret that he did not. The extreme dislike of Lords Bolingbroke and Chesterfield for the regular clergy, whom they would be glad to annoy in any way they could, might have had something to do with their patronage of the 'new lights,' as the Methodists were called. But this cannot be said of others. The Earl of Bath, for instance, accompanied a donation of 50*l.* to Lady Huntingdon for the Tabernacle at Bristol with the following remark: 'Mocked and reviled as Mr. Whitefield is (1749) by all ranks of society, still I contend that the day will come when England will be just, and own his greatness as a reformer, and his goodness as a minister of the Most High God.'[1] Lord Chesterfield gave 20*l.* to the same object.

Lady Huntingdon was not content with enlisting the nobility in favour of her cause. She made her way to the Court itself. She was scandalised by the gaiety of Archbishop Cornwallis's household, and, after having fruitlessly remonstrated with the primate, she laid her case before the King and the Queen. She was not only successful in the immediate object of her visit—the King, in consequence, writing a sharp letter to the archbishop, desiring him to desist from his unseemly routs—but was told by George III. that he was happy in having an opportunity of assuring her ladyship of the very good opinion he had of her, and how very highly he estimated her character, her zeal, and her abilities, which could not be consecrated to a more noble purpose. He then referred to her ministers, who, he understood, were very eloquent preachers. The bishops were jealous of them; and the King related a conversation he had lately had with a learned prelate. He had complained of the conduct of some of her ladyship's students and ministers, who had created a sensation in his diocese; and his Majesty replied, 'Make bishops of them—make bishops of them.' 'That might be done,' replied the prelate; 'but, please your Majesty, we cannot make a bishop of Lady Huntingdon.' The Queen replied, 'It would be a lucky circumstance if you could, for she puts you all to shame.' 'Well,' said the King, 'see if you cannot imitate the zeal of these men.' His lordship made some reply which displeased the King, who exclaimed with great animation, 'I wish there was a Lady Huntingdon in every diocese in the kingdom!'[2]

We have as yet seen only one side of Lady Huntingdon's

[1] *Lady Huntingdon's Life* (*ut supra*), ii. 379.

[2] See the *Christian Observer*, Oct. 1857, p. 707.

energy ; she was no less industrious in providing hearers for her preachers, than preachers for her hearers.[1] She almost rivalled John Wesley himself in the influence which she exercised over her preachers ; and she was as far removed as he was from any love of power for power's sake, although, like him, she constantly had this accusation brought against her. The extent of her power cannot be better stated than in the words of her biographer : 'Her ladyship erected or possessed herself of chapels in various parts of the kingdom, in which she appointed such persons to officiate as ministers as she thought fit, revoking such appointments at her pleasure. Congregations who worshipped here were called "Lady Huntingdon's Connexion," and the ministers who officiated "ministers in Lady Huntingdon's Connexion." Over the affairs of this Connexion Lady Huntingdon exercised a *moral* power to the time of her death ; not only appointing and removing the ministers who officiated, but appointing laymen in each congregation to superintend its secular concerns, called the "committee of management."'[2]

The first thing that obviously occurs to one in reference to this position is, that it should more properly belong to a man than a woman. Even in women of the strongest understanding and the deepest and widest culture, there is generally a want of ballast which unfits them for such a responsibility ; and Lady Huntingdon was not a lady of a strong understanding, and still less of a deep and wide culture. But she possessed what was better still—a single eye to her Master's glory, a truly humble mind, and genuine piety. The possession of these graces prevented her from falling into more errors than she did. Still, it is certainly somewhat beyond a woman's sphere to order Christian ministers about thus : 'Now, Wren, I charge you to be faithful, and to deliver a faithful message in all the congregations.' 'My lady,' said Wren, 'they will not bear it.' She rejoined, 'I will stand by you.'[3] On another occasion she happened to have two young ministers in her house, 'when it occurred to her that one of them should preach. Notice was accordingly sent round that on such an evening there would be preaching before the door. At the appointed time a great many people had collected together, which the young men, seeing, inquired what it meant. Her ladyship said, "As I have two preachers in my house, one of you must

[1] Indeed, Lady Huntingdon appears to have been the originator of lay preaching among the Methodists. Of Maxwell, the first lay preacher, she wrote to John Wesley : 'The first time I *made him* expound, expecting little from him, I sat over against him,' &c.—See *Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon*, i. 33.

[2] *Life of Lady Huntingdon*, ii. 490.

[3] Id. i. 309.

preach to the people." In reply, they said that they had never preached publicly, and wished to be excused. Shipman was ready, Matthews diffident. Lady Huntingdon, therefore, judged it best for Mr. Shipman to make the first attempt. While he hesitated she put a Bible into his hand, insisting upon his appearing before the people, and either telling them that he was afraid to trust in God, or to do the best he could. On the servant's opening the door, her ladyship thrust him out with her blessing, "The Lord be with you—do the best you can."'[1] At Trevecca—a college which she founded and supported solely at her own expense—her will was law. 'Trevecca,' wrote John Wesley,[2] 'is much more to Lady Huntingdon than Kingswood is to me. *I* mixes with everything. It is *my* college, *my* masters, *my* students!' When the unhappy Calvinistic controversy broke out in 1770, Lady Huntingdon proclaimed that whoever did not wholly disavow the Minutes should quit her college; and she fully acted up to her proclamation.[3] Fletcher's resignation was accepted, and Benson, the able head-master, was removed. John Wesley himself was no longer suffered to preach in any of her pulpits.

Her commands, however, were not always obeyed. Thus, for instance, we find Berridge good-naturedly rallying her on a peremptory summons he had received to 'supply' her chapel at Brighton. 'You threaten me, madam, like a pope, not like a mother in Israel, when you declare roundly that God will scourge me if I do not come; but I know your ladyship's good meaning, and this menace was not despised. It made me slow in resolving. Whilst I was looking towards the sea, partly drawn thither with the hope of doing good, and partly driven by your *Vatican Bull*, I found nothing but thorns in my way,' &c.[4] On a similar occasion the same good man writes to her with that execrably bad taste for which he was even more conspicuous than Whitefield: 'Jesus has been whispering to me of late that I cannot keep myself nor the flock committed to me; but has not hinted a word as yet that I do wrong in keeping to my fold. And my instructions, you know, must come from the Lamb, not from the Lamb's wife, though she is a tight woman.' John Wesley plainly told her that, though he loved her well, it could not continue if it depended upon his seeing with her eyes. Rowland Hill rebelled against her authority.

These, however, were exceptional cases. As a rule, Lady Huntingdon was in far more danger of being spoiled by flattery than of being discouraged by rebuffs. Poor Whitefield's painful

[1] *Life of Lady Huntingdon*, ii. 126, note.
[2] Id. ii. 325.
[3] Id. ii. 236.
[4] Id. i. 324.

adulation of his patroness has been already alluded to ; and it was but natural that the students at her college, who owed their all to her, should, in after-life, have been inclined to treat her with too great subservience.

One is thankful to find no traces of undue deference on the part of those parochial clergymen who were made her chaplains, and who at irregular intervals, when they could be spared from their own parishes, supplied her chapels. But though these good men did not flatter her, they felt and expressed the greatest respect for her character and exertions, as did also the Methodists generally. Fletcher described an interview with her in terms which sound rather overstrained, not to say irreverent, to English ears ; but allowance should be made for the 'effusion' in which foreigners are wont to indulge. 'Our conversation,' he writes to Charles Wesley, 'was deep and full of the energy of faith. As to me, I sat like Paul at the feet of Gamaliel ; I passed three hours with a modern prodigy—*a pious and humble countess.* I went with trembling and in obedience to your orders ; but I soon perceived a little of what the disciples felt when Christ said to them, *It is I—be not afraid.*' John Wesley, in spite of his differences with her, owned that 'she was much devoted to God and had a thousand valuable and amiable qualities.' Rowland Hill, when a young man, wrote in still stronger terms : 'I am glad to hear the *Head* is better. What zeal for God perpetually attends her ! Had I twenty bodies, I could like nineteen of them to run about for her.'[1]

The good countess was not unworthy of all this esteem. In spite of her little foibles, she was a thoroughly earnest Christian woman. Her munificence was unbounded. 'She would give,' said Grimshaw, 'to the last gown on her back.' She is said to have spent during her life more than 100,000*l.* in the service of religion.

Lady Huntingdon's Connexion, like John Wesley's societies, drifted away rather than separated from the National Church. In consequence of some litigation in the Consistorial Court of London about the Spa Fields Chapel, it became necessary to define more precisely the 'status' of Lady Huntingdon's places of worship. If they were still to be considered as belonging to the Church of England, they were, of course, bound to submit to the laws of the Church. In order to find shelter under the Toleration Act, it was necessary to register them as Dissenting places of worship. Thus Lady Huntingdon, much against her will, found herself a Dissenter. She expressed her regret in that extraor-

[1] *Life of the Rev. Rowland Hill*, by the Rev. E. Sidney, p. 65.

dinary English which she was wont to write. 'All the other connexions seem to be at peace, and I have ever found to belong to me while we were at ease in Zion. I am to be cast out of the Church now, only for what I have been doing these forty years—speaking and living for Jesus Christ; and if the days of my captivity are now to be accomplished, those that turn me out and so set me at liberty, may soon feel what it is, by sore distress themselves for those hard services they have caused me.'[1] Still she could not make up her mind to call herself and those in connexion with her, Dissenters. She tried to find some middle term; it was not a separation from the Church, but a 'secession;' which looks very like a distinction without a difference. 'Our ministers must come,' writes her ladyship in 1781, 'recommended by that neutrality between Church and Dissent—secession;' and to the same effect in 1782: 'Mr. Wills's secession from the Church (for which he is the most highly favoured of all from the noble and disinterested motives that engaged his honest and faithful conscience for the Lord's unlimited service) brings about an ordination of such students as are alike disposed to labour in the place and appointed for those congregations. The method of these appears the best calculated for the comfort of the students and to serve the congregations most usefully, and is contrived to prevent any bondage to the people or minister. The objections to the Dissenters' plan are many, and to the Church more; that secession means the neutrality between both, and so materially offensive to neither.'[2]

One result of this 'secession' was the withdrawal from the Connexion of those parochial clergymen who had given their gratuitous services to Lady Huntingdon—Romaine, Venn, Townsend, and others; but they still maintained the most cordial intimacy with the countess, and continued occasionally to supply her chapels.

It must be admitted, in justice to the Church rulers of the day, that the difficulties in the way of co-operation with Lady Huntingdon were by no means slight. Her Churchmanship, like that of her friend Whitefield, was not of the same marked type as that of John Wesley. It will be remembered that John Wesley, in his sermon at the foundation of the City Road Chapel in 1777—four years, be it observed, before Lady Huntingdon's secession—described, in his own vigorous language, the difference between the attitude of *his* followers towards the Church, and that of the followers of Lady Huntingdon and Mr. Whitefield So far as the two latter were concerned, he did not overstate

[1] *Life of Lady Huntingdon*, ii. 315. [2] Id. ii. 467.

the case. The college at Trevecca could hardly be regarded in any other light than that of a Dissenting Academy. Berridge saw this, and wrote to Lady Huntingdon : 'However rusty or rickety the Dissenters may appear to you, God hath His remnant among them ; therefore lift not up your hand against them for the Lord's sake nor yet for consistency's sake, because your students are as real Dissenting preachers as any in the land, unless a gown and band can make a clergyman. The bishops look on your students as the worst kind of Dissenters ; and manifest this by refusing that ordination to your preachers which would be readily granted to other teachers among the Dissenters.'[1] Berridge also thought that the Wesleyans would not retain their position as Churchmen. In the very same year (1777) in which Wesley gloried in the adhesion of his societies to the Church, Berridge wrote to Lady Huntingdon : 'What will become of your students at your decease ? They are virtual Dissenters now, and will be settled Dissenters then. And the same will happen to many, perhaps most, of Mr. Wesley's preachers at his death. He rules like a real Alexander, and is now stepping forth with a flaming torch ; but we do not read in history of two Alexanders succeeding each other.'[2]

But to return to Trevecca. The rules of the college specified that the students after three years' residence might, if they desired, enter the ministry either of the Church or any other Protestant denomination. Now, as Trevecca was essentially a theological college, it is hardly possible to conceive that the theology taught there could have been so colourless as not to bias the students in favour either of the Church or of Dissent ; and as the Church, in spite of her laxity, still retained her liturgy, creeds, and other forms, which were more dogmatic and precise than those of any Dissenting body, such a training as that of Trevecca would naturally result, as the Vicar of Everton predicted, in making the students, to all intents and purposes, Dissenters. The only wonder is that Lady Huntingdon's Connexion should have retained so strong an attachment to the Church as they undoubtedly did, and that, not only during her own lifetime, but after her death. 'You ask,' wrote Dr. Haweis to one who desired information on this point,[3] 'of what Church we profess ourselves ? We desire to be esteemed as members of Christ's Catholic and Apostolic Church, and essentially one with the Church of England, of which we regard ourselves as living members. . . . The doctrines we subscribe (for we require sub-

[1] Gledstone's *Life of Whitefield*, p. 465.
[2] *Life of Lady Huntingdon*, ii. 423.
[3] Id. ii. 521.

scription, and, what is better, they are always truly preached by us) are those of the Church of England in the literal and grammatical sense. Nor is the liturgy of the Church of England performed more devoutly in any Church,' &c.

The five worthy Christians whose characters and careers have been briefly sketched were the chief promoters of what may be termed the Methodist, as distinguished from the Evangelical, movement, in the technical sense of that epithet. There were many others who would be worthy of a place in a larger history. Thomas Walsh, Wesley's most honoured friend; Dr. Coke ('a second Walsh,' Wesley called him), who sacrificed a good position and a considerable fortune entirely to the Methodist cause; Mr. Perronet, the excellent Vicar of Shoreham, to whom both the brothers Wesley had recourse in every important crisis, and who was called by Charles Wesley 'the Archbishop of Methodism;' Sir John Thorold, a pious Lincolnshire baronet; John Nelson, the worthy stonemason of Birstal, who was pressed as a soldier simply because he was a Methodist, and whose death John Wesley thus records in his Journal: 'This day died John Nelson, and left a wig and half-a-crown—as much as any unmarried minister ought to leave;' Sampson Stainforth, Mark Bond, and John Haine, the Methodist soldiers who infused a spirit of Methodism in the British Army; Howell Harris, the life and soul of Welsh Methodism; Thomas Olivers, the converted reprobate, who rode one hundred thousand miles on one horse in the cause of Methodism, and who was considered by John Wesley as a strong enough man to be pitted against the ablest champions of Calvinism; John Pawson, Alexander Mather and other worthy men—of humble birth, it may be, and scanty acquirements, but earnest, devoted Christians—would all deserve to be noticed in a professed history of Methodism. In a brief sketch, like the present, all that can be said of them is, 'Cum tales essent, utinam nostri fuissent.'

(2) THE CALVINISTIC CONTROVERSY.

The Methodists met with a vast amount of opposition; but, after all, there was a more formidable enemy to the progress of the Evangelical revival than any from without. The good men who made so bold and effectual a stand against vice and irreligion in the last century might have been still more successful had they presented a united front to the common foe; but, unfortunately, a spirit of discord within their ranks wasted their strength and diverted them from work for which they were admirably adapted to work for which they were by no means fitted. Hitherto our attention has been mainly directed to the

strength of the movement. The pure lives and disinterested motives of the founders of Methodism, their ceaseless energy, their fervent piety—in a word, their love of God and their love of their neighbour for God's sake—these are the points on which one loves to dwell; these are traits in their characters which posterity has gratefully recognised, though scant justice was done them by the men of their own generation. In their quarrel with sin and Satan all good men will sympathise with them. It is painful to turn from this to their quarrels among themselves; but these latter occupy too large a space in their history to be lightly passed over.

It has frequently been remarked in these pages that the eighteenth century, or at least the first half of it, was essentially an age of controversy; but of all the controversies which distracted the Church and nation that one which now comes under our consideration was the most unprofitable and unsatisfactory in every way. The subject of it was that old, old difficulty which has agitated men's minds from the beginning, and will probably remain unsettled until the end of time—a difficulty which is not confined to Christianity, nor even to Deism, but which meets us quite apart from theology altogether. It is that which, in theological language, is involved in the contest between Calvinism and Arminianism; in philosophical, between free-will and necessity. 'The reconciling,' wrote Lord Lyttelton, 'the prescience of God with the free-will of man, Mr. Locke, after much thought on the subject, freely confessed that he could not do, though he acknowledged both. And what Mr. Locke could not do, in reasoning upon subjects of a metaphysical nature, I am apt to think few men, if any, can hope to perform.'[1] It would have been well if the Methodists had acted according to the spirit of these wise words; but, unfortunately, they considered it necessary not only to discuss the question, but to insist upon their own solution of it in the most positive and dogmatic terms.

One would have thought that John Wesley, at any rate, considering his expertness in logic, would have been aware of the utter hopelessness of disputing upon such a point; but the key to that great man's conduct in this, as in other matters, is to be found in the intensely practical character of his mind, especially in matters of religion. He felt the practical danger of Antinomianism, and, feeling this, he did not, perhaps, quite do justice to all that might be said on the other side. In point

[1] Lord Lyttelton's *Letter to Mr. West*, quoted in *A Refutation of Calvinism*, by G. Tomline, Bishop of Winchester, p. 253.

of fact, however, he shrank, especially in his later years, from the controversy more than others did, who were far less competent to manage it.

In other controversies which agitated the eighteenth century there is some compensation for the unkindly feelings and unchristian and extravagant language generated by the heat of dispute in the thought that if they did not solve, they at any rate contributed something to the solution of, pressing questions which clamoured for an answer. The circumstances of the times required that the subjects should be ventilated. Thus, for example, the relations between Church and State were ill understood, and *some* light, at any rate, was thrown upon them by the tedious Bangorian controversy. The method in which God reveals His will to man was a subject which circumstances rendered it necessary to discuss. This subject was fairly sifted in the Deistical controversy. The pains which were bestowed upon the Trinitarian controversy were not thrown away. But it is difficult to see what fresh light was thrown upon *any* subject by the Calvinistic controversy. It left the question exactly in the same position as it was in before. In studying the other controversies, if the reader derives but little instruction or edification on the main topic, he can hardly fail to gain some valuable information on collateral subjects. But he may wade through the whole of the Calvinistic controversy without gaining any valuable information on any subject whatever. This is partly owing to the nature of the topic discussed, but partly also to the difference between the mental calibre of the disputants in this and the other controversies. We have at least to thank the Deists and the Anti-Trinitarians for giving occasion for the publication of some literary masterpieces. Through their means English theology was enriched by the writings of Butler, Conybeare, Warburton, Waterland, Sherlock, and Horsley. But the Calvinistic controversy, from the beginning to the end, contributed not one single work of permanent value to theology.

This is a sweeping statement, and requires to be justified. Let us, then, pass on at once from general statements to details.

The controversy seems to have broken out during Whitefield's absence in America (1739–1740). A correspondence arose between Wesley and Whitefield on the subject of Calvinism and collateral questions, in which the two good men seem to be constantly making laudable determinations not to dispute -and as constantly breaking them. The gist of this correspondence has been wittily summed up thus : 'Dear George, I have read what you have written on the subject of predestination, and God has taught me to see that you are wrong and that I am right.

Yours affectionately, J. Wesley.' And the reply: 'Dear John, I have read what you have written on the subject of predestination, and God has taught me that I am right and you are wrong. Yours affectionately, G. Whitefield.'

If the dispute between these good men was warm while the Atlantic separated them, it was still warmer when they met. In 1741 Whitefield returned to England, and a temporary alienation between him and Wesley arose. Whitefield is said to have told his friend that they preached two different Gospels, and to have avowed his intention to preach against him whenever he preached at all. Then they turned the one to the right hand and the other to the left. As in most disputes, there were, no doubt, faults on both sides. Both were tempted to speak unadvisedly with their lips, and, what was still worse, to write unadvisedly with their pens. It has already been seen that John Wesley had the knack of both saying and writing very cutting things. If Whitefield was rash and lost his temper, Wesley was certainly irritating. But the details of the unfortunate quarrel may be found in any history of Wesley or Whitefield. It is a far pleasanter task to record that in course of time the breach was entirely healed, though neither disputant receded one jot from his opinions. No man was ever more ready to confess his faults, no man ever had a larger heart or was actuated by a truer spirit of Christian charity than George Whitefield. Never was there a man of a more forgiving temper than John Wesley. 'Ten thousand times would I rather have died than part with my old friends,' said Whitefield of the Wesleys. 'Bigotry flies before him and cannot stand,' said John Wesley of Whitefield. It was impossible that an alienation between two such men, both of whom were only anxious to do one great work, should be permanent.

From 1749 the Calvinistic controversy lay comparatively at rest for some years. The publication of Hervey's 'Dialogues between Theron and Aspasio,' in 1755, with John Wesley's remarks upon them, and Hervey's reply to the remarks, reawakened a temporary interest in the question, but it was not till the year 1771 that the tempest broke out again with more than its former force.

The occasion of the outburst was the publication of Wesley's 'Minutes of the Conference of 1770.' Possibly John Wesley may have abstained for some years, out of regard for Whitefield, from discussing in Conference a subject which was calculated to disturb the re-established harmony between him and his friend.[1]

[1] Not, of course, that he waited until the death of Whitefield before reopening the question; for Conference met in August, and Whitefield did not die until September 1770

At any rate, the offending Minutes, oddly enough, begin by referring to what had passed at the first Conference, twenty-six years before. 'We said in 1744, We have leaned too much towards Calvinism.' After a long abeyance the subject is taken up at the point at which it stood more than a quarter of a century before.

The Minutes have often been quoted; but, for clearness' sake, it may be well to quote them once more.

'We said in 1744, We have leaned too much towards Calvinism. Wherein—

'1. With regard to man's faithfulness, our Lord Himself taught us to use the expression: and we ought never to be ashamed of it. We ought steadily to assert, on His authority, that if a man is not "faithful in the unrighteous mammon" God will not "give him the true riches."

'2. With regard to working for life, this also our Lord has expressly commanded us. "Labour" (Ἐργάζεσθε — literally, "work") "for the meat that endureth to everlasting life." And, in fact, every believer, till he comes to glory, works for, as well as from, life.

'3. We have received it as a maxim that "a man can do nothing in order to justification." Nothing can be more false. Whoever desires to find favour with God should "cease to do evil and learn to do well." Whoever repents should do "works meet for repentance." And if this is not in order to find favour, what does he do them for?

'Review the whole affair.

'1. Who of us is now accepted of God?

'He that now believes in Christ, with a loving, obedient heart.

'2. But who among those that never heard of Christ?

'He that feareth God and worketh righteousness, according to the light he has.

'3. Is this the same with "he that is sincere"?

'Nearly if not quite.

'4. Is not this salvation by works?

'Not by the merit of works, but by works as a condition.

'5. What have we, then, been disputing about for these thirty years?

'I am afraid about words.

'6. As to merit itself, of which we have been so dreadfully afraid, we are rewarded according to our works—yea, because of our works.

'How does this differ from "for the sake of our works"? And how differs this from *secundum merita operum*, "as our

works deserve"? Can you split this hair? I doubt I cannot.

'7. The grand objection to one of the preceding propositions is drawn from matter of fact. God does in fact justify those who, by their own confession, "neither feared God nor wrought righteousness." Is this an exception to the general rule?

'It is a doubt if God makes any exception at all. But how are we sure that the person in question never did fear God and work righteousness? His own saying so is not proof; for we know how all that are convinced of sin undervalue themselves in every respect.

'8. Does not talking of a justified or a sanctified state tend to mislead men, almost naturally leading them to trust in what was done in one moment? Whereas we are every hour and every moment pleasing or displeasing to God, according to our works, according to the whole of our inward tempers and our outward behaviour.'[1]

So great was the alarm and indignation caused by these Minutes that a 'circular printed letter' was, at the instigation of Lady Huntingdon, sent round among the friends of the Evangelical movement, the purport of which was as follows:—'Sir, whereas Mr. Wesley's Conference is to be held at Bristol on Tuesday, August 6, next, it is proposed by Lady Huntingdon and many other Christian friends (real Protestants) to have a meeting at Bristol at the same time, of such principal persons, both clergy and laity, who disapprove of the under-written Minutes; and, as the same are thought injurious to the very fundamental principles of Christianity, it is further proposed that they go in a body to the said Conference, and insist upon a formal recantation of the said Minutes, and, in case of a refusal, that they sign and publish their protest against them. Your presence, sir, on this occasion is particularly requested; but, if it should not suit your convenience to be there, it is desired that you will transmit your sentiments on the subject to such persons as you think proper to produce them. It is submitted to you whether it would not be right, in the opposition to be made to such a dreadful heresy, to recommend it to as many of your Christian friends, as well of the Dissenters as of the Established Church, as you can prevail on to be there, the cause being of so public a nature. I am, &c., Walter Shirley.'

The first thing that naturally strikes one is, What business

[1] Extracts from the Minutes of some late Conversations between the Rev. Mr. Wesley and others at a Public Conference held in London, August 7, 1770, and printed by W. Pim, Bristol. 'Take heed to your doctrine.'

had Lady Huntingdon and her friends to interfere with Mr. Wesley and his Conference at all? But this obvious objection does not appear to have been raised. It would seem that there was a sort of vague understanding that the friends of the Evangelical movement, whether Calvinist or Arminian, were in some sense answerable to one another for their proceedings. The Calvinists evidently thought it not only permissible but their bounden duty not merely to disavow but to condemn, and, if possible, bring about the suppression of the obnoxious Minutes. Mr. Shirley said publicly 'he termed peace in such a case a shameful indolence, and silence no less than treachery.'[1] John Wesley did not refuse to justify to the Calvinists what he had asserted. He wrote to Lady Huntingdon in June 1771 (the Conference did not meet till August), referring her to his 'Sermons on Salvation by Faith,' published in 1738, and requesting that the 'Minutes of Conference might be interpreted by the sermons referred to.' Lady Huntingdon felt her duty to be clear. She wrote to Charles Wesley, declaring that the proper explanation of the Minutes was 'Popery unmasked.' 'Thinking,' she added, 'that those ought to be deemed Papists who did not disavow them, I readily complied with a proposal of an open disavowal of them.'[2]

All this augured ill for the harmony of the impending Conference; but it passed off far better than could possibly have been expected. Very few of the Calvinists who were invited to attend responded to the appeal. Christian feeling got the better of controversial bitterness on both sides. John Wesley, with a noble candour, drew up a declaration, which was signed by himself and fifty-three of his preachers, stating that, 'as the Minutes have been understood to favour justification by works, we, the Rev. John Wesley and others, declare we had no such meaning, and that we abhor the doctrine of justification by works as a most perilous and abominable doctrine. As the Minutes are not sufficiently guarded in the way they are expressed, we declare we have no trust but in the merits of Christ for justification or salvation. And though no one is a real Christian believer (and therefore cannot be saved) who doth not good works when there is time and opportunity, yet our works have no part in meriting or purchasing our justification from first to last, in whole or in part.'[3] Lady Huntingdon and her relative Mr. Shirley were not wanting, on their part, in Christian courtesy. 'As Christians,' wrote Lady Huntingdon, 'we wish to retract what a more deliberate consideration might have prevented, as we would as little

[1] *Life of Lady Huntingdon*, ii. 236. [2] Id. 240.
[3] Id. 240, 241.

wish to defend even truth itself presumptuously as we would submit servilely to deny it.' Mr. Shirley wrote to the same effect.

But, alas! the troubles were by no means at an end. Fletcher had written a vindication of the Minutes, which Wesley published. Wesley has been severely blamed for his inconsistency in acting thus, 'after having publicly drawn up and signed a recantation [explanation ?] of the obnoxious principles contained in the Minutes.'[1] This censure might seem to be justified by a letter which Fletcher wrote to Lady Huntingdon. 'When,' he says, 'I took up my pen in vindication of Mr. Wesley's sentiments, it never entered my heart that my doing so would have separated me from those I love and esteem. Would to God I had never done it! To your ladyship it has caused incalculable pain and unhappiness, and my conscience hath often stung me with bitter and heartcutting reproaches.'[2] But, on the other hand, Fletcher himself, in a preface to his 'Second Check to Antinomianism,' entirely exonerated Wesley from all blame in the matter, and practically proved his approbation of his friend's conduct by continuing the controversy in his behalf.

The dogs of war were now let slip. In 1772 Sir Richard Hill and his brother Rowland measured swords with Fletcher, and drew forth from him his Third and Fourth Checks. In 1773 Sir R. Hill gave what he termed his 'Finishing Stroke;' Berridge, the eccentric Vicar of Everton, rushed into the fray with his 'Christian World Unmasked;' and Toplady, the ablest of all who wrote on the Calvinist side, published a pamphlet under the suggestive title of 'More Work for John Wesley.' The next year (1774) there was a sort of armistice between the combatants, their attention being diverted from theological to political subjects, owing to the troubles in America. But in 1775 Toplady again took the field, publishing his 'Historic Proof of the Calvinism of the Church of England.' Mr. Sellon, a clergyman, and Mr. Olivers, the manager of Wesley's printing, appeared on the Arminian side. The very titles of some of the works published sufficiently indicate their character. 'Farrago Double Distilled,' 'An Old Fox Tarred and Feathered,' 'Pope John,' tell their own tale.

In fact, the kindest thing that could be done to the authors of this bitter writing (who were really good men) would be to let it all be buried in oblivion. Some of them lived to be ashamed of what they had written. Rowland Hill, though he still retained his views as to the doctrines he opposed, lamented

[1] *Life of Lady Huntingdon*, ii. 243, &c.

[2] Id. 245. Berridge said the contest at Bristol turned upon this hinge, whether it should be Pope John or Pope Joan.

in his maturer age that the controversy had not been carried on in a different spirit.[1] Toplady, after he had seen Olivers, wrote: 'To say the truth, I am glad I saw Mr. Olivers, for he appears to be a person of stronger sense and better behaviour than I had imagined.'[2] Fletcher (who had really the least cause of any to regret what he had written), before leaving England for a visit to his native country, invited all with whom he had been engaged in controversy to see him, that, 'all doctrinal differences apart, he might testify his sincere regret for having given them the least displeasure,' &c.[3]

It will be remembered that the Deistical controversy was conducted with considerable acrimony on both sides; but the Deistical and anti-Deistical literature is amenity itself when compared with the bitterness and scurrility with which the Calvinistic controversy was carried on. At the same time it would be a grievous error to conclude that because the good men who took part in it forgot the rules of Christian charity they were not under the power of Christian influences. The very reverse was the case. It was the very earnestness of their Christian convictions, and the intensity of their belief in the directing agency of the Holy Spirit over Christian minds, which made them write with a warmth which human infirmity turned into acrimony. They all felt *de vitâ et sanguine agitur*; they all believed that they were directed by the Spirit of God: consequently their opponents were opponents not of them, the human instruments, but of that God who was working by their means; in plain words, they were doing the work of the Devil. Add to this a somewhat strait and one-sided course of reading, and a very imperfect appreciation of the real difficulties of the subject they were handling (for all, without exception, write with the utmost confidence, as if they understood the whole matter thoroughly, and nothing could possibly be written to any purpose on the other side), and the paradox of truly Christian men using such truly unchristian weapons will cease to puzzle us.

Two only of the writers in this badly managed controversy deserve any special notice—viz., Fletcher on the Arminian and Toplady on the Calvinist side.

Fletcher's 'Checks to Antinomianism' are still remembered by name (which is more than can be said of most of the literature connected with this controversy), and may, perhaps, still be read,

[1] And of his own writings he said: 'A softer style and spirit would have better become me.'—See *Life of Rev. R. Hill*, by Rev. G. Sidney, pp. 121, 122.

[2] Id. p. 122.

[3] Southey's *Life of Wesley*, ii. 180.

and even regarded as an authority by a few ; but they are little known to the general reader, and occupy no place whatever in theological literature. Perhaps they hardly deserve to do so. Nevertheless, anything which such a man as Fletcher wrote is worthy at least of respectful consideration, if for nothing else, at any rate for the saintly character of the writer. He wrote like a scholar and a gentleman, and, what is better than either, like a Christian. Those who accuse him of having written bitterly against the Calvinists cannot, one would imagine, have read his writings, but must have taken at second hand the cruelly unjust representation of them given by his opponents.[1] 'If ever,' wrote Southey, with perfect truth, 'true Christian charity was manifested in polemical writing, it was by Fletcher of Madeley.' There is but one passage [2] in which Fletcher condescends to anything like personal scurrility, in spite of the many grossly personal insults which were heaped upon him and his friends.

This self-restraint is all the more laudable because Fletcher possessed a rich vein of satirical humour, which he might have employed with telling effect against his opponents.

He also showed an excellent knowledge of Scripture and great ingenuity in explaining it on his own side. He was an adroit and skilful disputant, and, considering that he was a foreigner, had a great mastery over the English language.

What, in spite of these merits, makes the 'Checks' an unsatisfactory book, is the want of a comprehensive grasp of general principles. In common with all the writers on both sides of the question, Fletcher shows a strange lack of philosophical modesty —a lack which is all the stranger in him because personally he was conspicuous for extreme modesty and thoroughly genuine humility. But there is no appearance, either in Fletcher's writings or in those of any others who engaged in the controversy, that they adequately realised the extreme difficulty of the subject. Everything is stated with the utmost confidence, as if the whole difficulty—which an archangel might have felt—was entirely cleared away. If one compares Fletcher's writings on Calvinism with the scattered notices of the subject in Waterland's works, the difference between the two writers is apparent at once ; there is a massiveness and a breadth of culture about the older writer which contrasts painfully with the thinness and narrowness of the younger. Or, if it be unfair to compare Fletcher with an intellectual giant like Waterland, we may compare his 'Checks' with Bishop Tomline's 'Refutation of Calvinism.' Bishop Tomline

[1] See the abuse quoted in the *Fourth Check*, pp. 11, 42, 121.
[2] See *Fourth Check*, p. 155.

is even more unfair to the Calvinists than Fletcher, but he shows far greater maturity both of style and thought. All the three writers took the same general view of the subject, though from widely different standpoints. But Tomline is as much superior to Fletcher as he is inferior to Waterland.

If Fletcher was pre-eminently the best writer in this controversy on the Arminian side, it is no less obvious that the palm must be awarded to Toplady on the Calvinist side. Before we say anything about Toplady's writings, let it be remembered that his pen does not do justice to his character. Toplady was personally a pious, worthy man, a diligent pastor, beloved by and successful among his parishioners, and by no means quarrelsome —except upon paper. He lived a blameless life, principally in a small country village, and died at the early age of thirty-eight It is only fair to notice these facts, because his controversial writings might convey a very different impression of the character of the man.

Toplady is described by his biographer as 'the legitimate successor of Hervey.'[1] There are certain points of resemblance between the two men. Both were worthy parish priests, and the spheres of duty of both lay in remote country villages; both died at a comparatively early age; both were Calvinists; and both in the course of controversy came into collision with John Wesley. But here the resemblance ends. To describe Toplady as the legitimate successor of Hervey is to do injustice to both. For, on the one hand, Toplady (though his writings were never so popular) was a far abler and far more deeply read man than Hervey. There was also a vein of true poetry in him, which his predecessor did not possess. Hervey could never have written 'Rock of Ages.' On the other hand, the gentle Hervey was quite incapable of writing the violent abuse, the bitter personal scurrilities, which disgraced Toplady's pen. A sad lack of Christian charity is conspicuous in all writers (except Fletcher) in this ill-conducted controversy, but Toplady outherods Herod.

One word must be added. Although, considered as permanent contributions to theological literature, the writings on either side are worthless, yet the dispute was not without value in its immediate effects. It taught the later Evangelical school to guard more carefully their Calvinistic views against the perversions of Antinomianism. This we shall see when we pass on, as we may now do, to review that system which may be termed 'Evangelicalism' in distinction to the earlier Methodism.

[1] *Works of A. M. Toplady, with Memoir of the Author*, in six volumes, vol. i. p. 100.

(3) THE EVANGELICALS.

Largior hic campos æther et lumine vestit
Purpureo . . . .

It is with a real sense of relief that we pass out of the close air and distracting hubbub of an unprofitable controversy into a fresher and calmer atmosphere.

The Evangelical section of the English Church cannot, without considerable qualification, be regarded as the outcome of the earlier movement we have been hitherto considering. It is true that what we must perforce call by the awkward names of 'Evangelicalism' and 'Methodism' had many points in common —that they were constantly identified by the common enemies of both—that they were both parts of what we have termed in the widest sense of the term 'the Evangelical revival'—that they, in fact, crossed and interlaced one another in so many ways that it is not always easy to disentangle the one from the other—that there are several names which one is in doubt whether to place on one side of the line or the other. But still it would be a great mistake to confound the two parties. There was a different tone of mind in the typical representatives of each. They worked for the most part in different spheres, and, though their doctrines may have accorded in the main, there were many points, especially as regards Church order and regularity, in which there was no cordial sympathy between them.

The difficulty, however, of disentangling Evangelicalism from Methodism in the early phases of both confronts us at once when we begin to consider the cases of individuals.

Among the first in date of the Evangelicals proper we must place *James Hervey* (1714–1758), the once popular author of 'Meditations and Contemplations' and 'Theron and Aspasio.' But then Hervey was one of the original Methodists. He was an undergraduate of Lincoln College at the same time that John Wesley was Fellow, and soon came under the influence of that powerful mind ; and he kept up an intimacy with the founder of Methodism long after he left college. Yet it is evidently more correct to class Hervey among the Evangelicals than among the Methodists ; for in all the points of divergence between the two schools he sided with the former. He was a distinct Calvinist ;[1]

[1] But at the same time a very modest and moderate one. 'Predestination,' he wrote, 'and reprobation I think of with fear and trembling ; and, if I should attempt to study them, I would study them on my knees.' (Letter, dated Miles's Lane, March 24, 1752, quoted by Mr. Tyerman in his *Oxford Methodists*, p. 270.) And again : 'As for points of doubtful dispu-

he was always engaged in parochial work, and he not only took no part in itinerant work, but expressed his decided disapproval of those clergy who did so, venturing even to remonstrate with his former Mentor on his irregularities.

There are few incidents in Hervey's short and uneventful life which require notice. It was simply that of a good country parson. The disinterestedness and disregard for wealth, which honourably distinguished almost all the Methodist and Evangelical clergy, were conspicuous features in Hervey's character. His father held two livings near Northampton—Weston Favell and Collington; but, though the joint incomes only amounted to 180*l.* a year, and though the villages were both of small population and not far apart, Hervey for some time scrupled to be a pluralist; and it was only in order to provide for the wants of an aged mother and a sister that he at length consented to hold both livings. He solemnly devoted the whole produce of his literary labours to the service of humanity, and, though his works were remunerative beyond his most sanguine expectations, he punctually kept his vow. He is said to have given no less than 700*l.* in seven years in charity - in most cases concealing his name. Nothing more need be said about his quiet, blameless, useful life.

It is as an author that James Hervey is best known to us. The popularity which his writings long enjoyed presents to us a curious phenomenon. Almost to this day old-fashioned libraries of divinity are not complete without the 'Meditations' and 'Theron and Aspasio,' though probably they are not often read in this age.[1] But by Hervey's contemporaries his books were not only bought, but read and admired. They were translated into almost every modern language. The fact that such works were popular, not among the uneducated, but among those who called themselves people of culture, almost justifies John Wesley's caustic exclamation, 'How hard it is to be superficial enough for

tation, those especially which relate to *particular* or *universal* redemption, I profess myself attached neither to the one nor the other. I neither think of them myself nor preach of them to others. If they happen to be started in conversation, I always endeavour to divert the discourse to some more edifying topic. I have often observed them to breed animosity and division, but never knew them to be productive of love and unanimity. . . . Therefore I rest satisfied in this general and indisputable truth, that the Judge of all the earth will assuredly do right,' &c. This, however, was written in 1747 (see Tyerman, 254). Perhaps when he wrote *Theron and Aspasio* some years later his views were somewhat changed.

[1] Mr. Tyerman, however, thinks otherwise. After the lapse of a hundred years,' he writes (*Oxford Methodists*, p. 201), 'since the author's death, few are greater favourites at the present day.'

a polite audience!' Hervey's style can be described in no meaner terms than as the extra-superfine style. It is prose run mad. Let the reader judge for himself. Here is a specimen of his 'Meditations among the Tombs.' The tomb of an infant suggests the following reflections: 'The peaceful infant, staying only to wash away its native impurity in the laver of regeneration, bid a speedy adieu to time and terrestrial things. What did the little hasty sojourner find so forbidding and disgustful in our upper world to occasion its precipitate exit?' The tomb of a young lady calls forth the following morbid horrors:—'Instead of the sweet and winning aspect, that wore perpetually an attractive smile, grins horribly a naked, ghastly skull. The eye that outshone the diamond's brilliancy, and glanced its lovely lightning into the most guarded heart — alas! where is it? Where shall we find the rolling sparkler? How are all its sprightly beams eclipsed!' The tongue, flesh, &c., are dwelt upon in the same fashion.

It is hard to believe that this was really considered fine writing by our ancestors, but the fact is indisputable. The 'Meditations' brought in a clear gain of 700*l*. Dr. Blair, himself a model of taste in his day, spoke in high terms of approbation of Hervey's writings. Boswell records with evident astonishment that Dr. Johnson 'thought slightingly of this admired book' (the 'Meditations'); 'he treated it with ridicule, and parodied it in a "Meditation on a Pudding."'[1] Most modern readers will be surprised that any sensible people could think otherwise than Dr. Johnson did of such a farrago of highflown sentiment clothed in the most turgid language.

It is a pity that Hervey could not learn to be less bombastic in his style and less vapid in his sentiments, for, after all, he had an eye for the sublime and beautiful both in the world around him and in the heavens above his head—a faculty very rare in the age in which he lived, and especially in the school to which he belonged. Occasionally he condescends to be more simple and natural, and consequently more readable. Here and there one meets with a passage which almost reminds one of Addison, but such exceptions are rare.[2]

Ten years after the publication of the first volume of the 'Meditations' (1745) Hervey published (1755) three volumes of 'Dialogues between Theron and Aspasio,' with a view to recommend to 'people of elegant manners and polite accomplishments'

[1] Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, vol. v. p. 93.

[2] See especially *Meditations among the Tombs*, p. 29, the passage beginning, 'Since we are so liable to be dispossessed of this earthly tabernacle,' &c.

the Calvinistic theology, and more especially the doctrine of Christ's imputed righteousness stated Calvinistically. The style of these 'Dialogues' is not quite so absurd as that of the 'Meditations,' but still it is inflated enough. The disputants always converse in the highly genteel manner. But the book was suited to the public taste, and was almost as successful as its predecessor. 'I write for the poor,' wrote Whitefield to the author, 'you for the polite and noble.' The aim of the treatise is expressed in the work itself. 'Let us endeavour to make religious conversation, which is in all respects desirable, in some degree fashionable.'

Hervey seems to have felt that he was treading upon debatable ground when he wrote this work; and therefore, acting upon the principle that 'in the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom,' he distributed different parts of his manuscript among his friends before publication, and adopted, on their advice, a variety of alterations. Among others he consulted John Wesley—of all men in the world—Wesley, who never used two words where one would suffice, and never chose a long word where he could find a short one to express his meaning[1]—Wesley, too, who disliked everything savouring of Calvinism, and who was not likely, therefore, to regard with a favourable eye a Calvinistic treatise written in a diffuse and turgid style. Hervey's biographer tells us that Wesley gave his opinion without tenderness or reserve—condemned the language, reprobated the doctrines, and tried to invalidate the proofs.[2] The writer owns that there was 'good sense in some of the remarks,' but thinks that 'their dogmatical language and dictatorial style entirely prevented their effect.'[3] Toplady also censures the 'rancour with which Mr. Hervey and his works were treated by Wesley.'[4] We may well believe that Wesley, one of whose infirmities it was to write rough letters, would not be particularly complimentary. But surely Hervey should have known his man better than to have placed him in such an awkward predicament. It should be remembered, too, that Wesley looked upon Hervey as his spiritual son, and therefore felt himself to some extent responsible for his theological views and literary performances. It should also be borne in mind that Hervey was an undergraduate at Lincoln

[1] 'I dare no more write in a *fine style*,' he said, 'than wear a fine coat. . . . I should purposely decline what many admire—a highly ornamental style.'

[2] Hervey's *Letters* in answer to Wesley were published after his death, against his own wish expressed when he was dying.

[3] Hervey's *Meditations*, &c., *ut supra*, *Life*.

[4] Toplady's *Works*, i. 102.

College when Wesley was a don. All who know the relationship which exists or existed between dons and undergraduates will be aware that the former often feel themselves privileged to address their quondam pupils with a freedom which others would not venture to use.

Those who judge of Hervey by his works might be tempted to think that he was affected and unreal. In fact, he was quite the reverse. When writing for the polite world,[1] his style was odiously florid ; but his sermons for his simple parishioners were plain and natural both in style and substance. Personally he was a man of simple habits and genuine piety, a good son and brother, an excellent parish priest, and a patient sufferer under many physical infirmities. He had no exaggerated opinion of his own intellectual powers. 'My friend,' he said to Mr. Ryland, 'I have not a strong mind ; I have not powers fitted for arduous researches ; but I think I have a power of writing in somewhat of a striking manner, so far as to please mankind and recommend my dear Redeemer.'[2] This was really the great object of his life, 'to recommend his dear Redeemer ;' and if he effected this object by writing what may appear to us poor stuff, we need not quarrel with him, but may rather be thankful that he did not write in vain.

Grimshaw of Haworth (1708–1763) was another clergyman of the last century who formed a connecting link between the Methodists proper and the later Evangelical school. On the one hand, he was an intimate friend of the Wesleys and other leaders of the Methodist movement, both lay and clerical ; he welcomed them at Haworth and lent them his pulpit ; he took part in the work of itinerancy, and, in fact, threw himself heart and soul into the Methodist cause. On the other hand, he was, from the beginning to the end of his ministerial career, a parochial clergyman ; he does not appear to have been indebted to Methodism for his first serious impressions, and he maintained his position as a moderate Calvinist, though he wisely kept quite clear of the controversy and never came into collision with his friend Wesley on this fruitful subject of dispute. The scenes of his energetic and successful labours were the moors about Haworth, the bleak physical desolation of which was only too true a picture of the moral and spiritual desolation of their population before this good man awakened them to spiritual life. The eccentricities

[1] 'My writings,' he wrote to Lady F. Shirley, 'are not fit for ordinary people : I never give them to such persons, and dissuade this class of men from procuring them. O that they may be of some service to the more refined part of the world !'

[2] *Life of Hervey*, prefixed to his *Meditations, ut supra.*

of 'mad Grimshaw' have probably been exaggerated; for one knows how, when a man acquires a reputation of this sort, every ridiculous story which happens to be current is apt to be fathered upon him. No doubt he *was* eccentric; he possessed a quaint humour which was not unusual in the early Evangelical school; but he never allowed himself to be so far carried away by this spirit as to bring ridicule upon the cause which he had at heart.

If it were the object of these sketches to make people laugh, Grimshaw's life would furnish us with a fruitful subject of amusement. How he dressed himself up as an old woman in order to discover who were the disturbers of his cottage lectures; how he sold his Alderney cow because 'she would follow him up into the pulpit;' how a visitor at Haworth looked out of his bedroom window one morning and saw to his horror the vicar cleaning his guest's boots; how he is said (though this anecdote is rather apocryphal) once to have made his congregation sing all the 176 verses of the 119th Psalm, while he went out to beat up the wanderers to attend public worship; how he once interrupted a preacher who was congratulating the Haworth people on the advantages they enjoyed under a Gospel ministry, by crying out in a loud voice, 'No, no, sir, don't flatter them; they are most of them going to Hell with their eyes open;' these and many other such stories might be told at full length.[1] But it is more profitable to dwell upon the noble, disinterested work which he did, quite unrecognised by the great men of his day, in a district which had sore need of such apostolical labours. His last words were, 'Here goes an unprofitable servant'—words which are no doubt true in the mouths of the best of men; but if any man might have boasted that he had done profitable service in his Master's cause, that man would have been William Grimshaw.

There is a strong family likeness between Grimshaw and *Berridge of Everton* (1716–1793), but the marked features of the character were more conspicuous in the latter than in the former. Both were energetic country parsons, and both itinerated; but Berridge went over a wider field than Grimshaw. Both were oddities; but the oddities of Berridge were more outrageous than those of Grimshaw. Both were stirring preachers; but the effects of Berridge's preaching were more startling if not more satisfactory than those which attended Grimshaw. Both were Calvinists; but Berridge's Calvinism was of the more marked type of the two. Moreover, Berridge rushed into the very thick of the Calvinistic controversy, from which Grimshaw held aloof. Berridge was the better read and the more highly trained man of the two. He

[1] See Ryle's *Christian Leaders of the Last Century.*

was a Fellow of Clare Hall, Cambridge, and before his conversion he was much sought after, and that by men of great eminence, as a wit and an amusing boon companion. The parish church of Everton was constantly the scene of those violent physical symptoms which present a somewhat puzzling phenomenon to the student of early Methodism. Berridge's eccentricities, both in the pulpit and out of it, caused pain to the more sober-minded of the Evangelical party. Thus we find John Thornton expostulating with him in the following terms: 'The tabernacle people are in general wild and enthusiastic, and delight in anything out of the common, which is a temper of mind, though in some respect necessary, yet should never be encouraged. If you and some few others, who have the greatest influence over them, would use the curb instead of the spur, I am persuaded the effects would be very blessed. You told me you was born with a fool's cap on. Pray, my dear sir, is it not high time it was pulled off?' Berridge, in his reply, admits the impeachment, but cannot resist giving Thornton a Roland for his Oliver. 'A fool's cap,' he writes, 'is not put off so readily as a night-cap. One cleaves to the head, and one to the heart. It has been a matter of surprise to me how Dr. Conyers could accept of Deptford living, and how Mr. Thornton could present him to it. Has not lucre led him to Deptford, and has not a family connection ruled your private judgment?'[1]

Specimens of Berridge's odd style and occasionally bad taste have already been given in connection with Lady Huntingdon, and need not here be multiplied. It was no doubt questionable propriety to say that 'nature lost her legs in paradise, and has not found them since,' or that 'an angel might preach such doctrine as was commonly preached till his wings dropped off without doing any good,' or to tell us that 'he once went to Jesus as a coxcomb and gave himself fine airs.' But it is far more easy to laugh at and to criticise the foibles of the good man than to imitate his devotedness to his Master's service, and the moral courage which enabled him to exchange the dignified position and learned leisure of a University don for the harassing life and despised position of a Methodist preacher—for so the Vicar of Everton would have been termed in his own day.

The Evangelical revival drew within the sphere of its influence men of the most opposite characters. It would be difficult to conceive a more complete contrast than that which *William Romaine* (1714–1795) presented to the two worthies last mentioned. Grave, severe, self-restrained, and, except to those who knew

[1] See *Life of Lady Huntingdon*, i. 374.

him intimately, somewhat repellent in manners, Romaine would have been quite unfitted for the work which Grimshaw and Berridge, in spite—or, shall we say, in consequence?—of their boisterous bonhomie and occasionally ill-timed jocularity were able to do. The farmers and working men of Haworth or Everton would assuredly have gone to sleep under his preaching, or stayed away from church altogether. One can scarcely fancy Romaine itinerating at all; but if he had done so, the bleak moors of Yorkshire or the cottage homes of Bedfordshire would not have been suitable spheres for his labours. But where he was, he was the right man in the right place. Among the grave and decorous citizens who attended the city churches, and among the educated congregations who flocked to hear him at St. George's, Hanover Square, Romaine was appreciated. Both in his character and in his writings Romaine approached more nearly than any of the so-called Puritans of his day to the typical Puritan of the seventeenth century. He was like one born out of due time. One can fancy him more at home with Flavel, Howe, and Baxter than with Whitefield, Berridge, and Grimshaw. Did we not know its date, we might have imagined that the 'Life, Walk, and Triumph of Faith' was written a hundred years before it actually was. Its very style and language were archaic in the eighteenth century. Romaine, indeed, thoroughly won the sympathy of the generation in which he lived, or at any rate of the school to which he belonged. But it was a work of time. He was at Oxford at the time of the rise of Methodism, but appears to have held no communication with its promoters. In another respect he differed from almost all the Evangelicals. There was apparently no transition, either abrupt or gradual, in his views. The only change which we can trace in his career is the change in his outer life from the learned leisure of a six years' residence at Oxford and ten years in a country curacy to the more active sphere of duty of a London clergyman. The mere fact that a man of his high reputation for learning and his irreproachable life should have been left unbeneficed until he had reached the ripe age of fifty-two, is another proof of the suspicion with which Methodism was regarded; for no doubt he was early suspected of being tainted with Methodism. He belonged to Lady Huntingdon's Connexion until the 'secession' of 1781, when, like Venn and other parochial clergymen, he was compelled to withdraw from formal union, though he still retained the closest intimacy with her. He was for some time her senior chaplain, and her adviser and assistant on all occasions. Although he differed from John Wesley on the disputed points of Arminianism and sinless perfection more widely than any of his co-religionists, he appears to have retained the

affection of that great man after others had lost it ; for we find Wesley writing to Lady Huntingdon in 1763: 'Only Mr. Romaine has shown a truly sympathising spirit, and acted the part of a brother.' Indeed, although Romaine was quite ready to enter into the lists of controversy with Warburton and others whom he considered to be outside the Evangelical pale, he seems to have held aloof from the disputes which distracted those within that pale. 'Things are not here' [in London], he writes to Lady Huntingdon, 'as at Brighthelmstone ; Foundry, Tabernacle, Lock, Meeting, yea and St. Dunstan's itself [his own church], has each its party, and brotherly love is almost lost in our disputes. Thank God, I am out of them.'

Romaine's Calvinism was of a more extreme type than that of most of the Evangelicals. He was no Antinomian himself, but one can well believe that his teaching might easily be perverted to Antinomian purposes. Wilberforce has an entry in his journal for 1795 :—'Dined with old Newton, where met Henry Thornton and Macaulay. Newton very calm and pleasing. Owned that Romaine had made many Antinomians.'[1] It seems not improbable that Thomas Scott, when he spoke of 'great names sanctioning Antinomianism,' had Romaine in view ; at any rate, there is no contemporary 'great name' to whom the remark would apply with equal force.[2] It should be added that the 'Life, &c., of Faith' possesses the strength as well as the defects of early Puritanism. It is, perhaps, on the whole, the strongest book, as its author was the strongest man of any who appeared among the Evangelicals. To find its equal we must go back to the previous century.

We have hitherto been tracing the work of the Evangelical clergy in remote country villages and in London. We have now to turn to one whose most important work was done in a different sphere from either. *Henry Venn* (1724–1797) is chiefly known as the Vicar of Huddersfield, though he only held that post for twelve out of the seventy-three years of his life. Like all the rest of the Evangelical clergy whom we have noticed, Venn was a connecting link between the Methodists and the Evangelicals proper. Like Romaine, he belonged to Lady Huntingdon's Connexion until the secession of 1781. He was also in the habit of itinerating during the early part of his Evangelical ministry. He was on the most intimate terms with the Wesleys and Whitefield, and thoroughly identified himself with their practical work. But his

[1] *Life of Wilberforce*, by his Sons, vol. ii. p. 137.

[2] See *Life, Walk, and Triumph of Faith*, by W. Romaine, especially pp. 28, 40, 98, 99, 102, 149, 158, 182, 192, 227, 229, 232, 233, 274, 275, 286, 287, 321.

son tells us in his most interesting biography that his views changed on this matter. 'Induced,' he writes, 'by the hope of doing good, my father in certain instances preached in unconsecrated places. But having acknowledged this, it becomes my pleasing duty to state that he was no advocate for irregularity in others; that when he afterwards considered it in its different bearings and connections, he lamented that he had given way to it, and restrained several other persons from such acts by the most cogent arguments.'[1] The dispute between Venn and John Wesley as to whether the Methodist preachers should be withdrawn from parishes where an Evangelical incumbent was appointed has been already noticed.

The career of Henry Venn is particularly interesting and important, because it shows us not only the points of contact between the Methodists and Evangelicals, but also their points of divergence. In spite of his itineracy and his strong sympathy with the Methodist leaders, Venn furnishes a more marked type of the rising Evangelical school than any whom we have yet noticed. Apart from his literary work, it was as a parish priest rather than as an evangelist that Venn made his mark. His preaching at Huddersfield was unquestionably most effective; but its effect was at least as much due to the great respect which he inspired, the disinterestedness of his whole life and work, the affectionate earnestness and sound practical sense of his counsel—in short, to his pastoral efforts—as to his mere oratory. Again, the Calvinism of Henry Venn was distinctly that of the later Evangelical school rather than that of Whitefield and Romaine. He was a Calvinist of precisely the same type as Newton, and Scott, and Cecil, and the two Milners.

His closing years were very calm and happy. Worn out before his time in his Master's work, he was obliged to exchange at the early age of forty-seven the harass of a large town parish for the quiet of a country village. More than a quarter of a century he passed in the peaceful retirement of Yelling; but he was not idle. He faithfully attended to his little parish, he trained up his family with admirable judgment in the principles of piety, and had the satisfaction of living to see his sons walking in his steps. One of them, John, became the respected and useful rector of Clapham, to which place Henry Venn retired to die. There are few names which are more highly esteemed among the Evangelical party than the honoured name of Venn.

Henry Venn earned an honourable name as a writer no less

[1] 'Memoir of the Author,' prefixed to Venn's *Complete Duty of Man* (new ed. London, Religious Tract Society), p. xiii. preface 3.

than as a pastor and preacher. It is not necessary here to dwell upon the few sermons of his which are extant, and which probably give us a very inadequate idea of his preaching power; nor yet upon his correspondence, although it deserves a high place among those letters which form a conspicuous feature in the literature of the eighteenth century. But he wrote one work which requires further notice. The 'Complete Duty of Man' would, if nothing else did, prevent his name from sinking into oblivion. It deserves to live for its intrinsic merits. It is one of the few instances of a devotional book which is not unreadable. It is not, like some of the class, full of mawkish sentimentality; nor, like others, so high-flown that it cannot be used for practical purposes by ordinary mortals without a painful sense of unreality; nor, like others, so intolerably dull as to disgust the reader with the subject which it designs to recommend. It is written in a fine, manly, sensible strain of practical piety. Venn's Huddersfield experience no doubt stood him in good stead when he wrote this little treatise; the faithful pastor had been wont to give advice orally to many an anxious inquirer, and he put forth in print the counsel which he had found to be most effectual among his appreciative parishioners. It is this fact, that it is evidently the work of a man of practical experience, which constitutes the chief merit of the book. Regarded as a literary composition, it by no means attains a high rank, for its style is somewhat heavy and its arguments are not very deep. If we would appreciate its excellence we must take it simply as the counsel of a sincere and affectionate friend. Among the devotional books of the century [1] it stands perhaps only second—*longo sed proximus intervallo*—to the great work which, more than any other, originated the Evangelical revival. This, after all, is not necessarily very high praise; for the devotional books of the eighteenth century do not reach a very high degree of excellence; [2] with the single exception of the 'Serious Call,' not one of them can be compared with the best of the preceding century—with Jeremy Taylor's 'Holy Living and

[1] Or perhaps we should have said 'of the Evangelical school;' only, Law can hardly be said to have belonged to that school. Bishop Wilson's *Sacra Privata*, and other devotional works, and some of Bishop Ken's devotional works, rank, intellectually at any rate, far above Venn's *Complete Duty of Man*.

[2] Here again we must except Bishop Wilson, who hardly seems to belong to the eighteenth century. He was as one born out of due time. We must except, too, some of the works of those High Churchmen of the old type, who lived on into the eighteenth century, but who, in their lives and writings, reflected the spirit of a past age—a spirit which breathes in every prayer of our Liturgy, but which is very rarely seen in the eighteenth century, or, for the matter of that, in the nineteenth.

Holy Dying,' for instance, or Baxter's 'Call to the Unconverted,' or his 'Saint's Everlasting Rest,' or Howe's 'Living Temple.'

But there is an historical interest in the 'Complete Duty of Man' quite apart from its intrinsic merits. It may be regarded generally as a sort of manifesto of the Evangelical party; and specially as a counterblast against the defective theology of what Whitefield called 'England's greatest favourite, "The Whole Duty of Man."' The very title of Venn's work indicates its relationship to that once famous book. The 'Whole Duty of Man' was written anonymously in the days of the Commonwealth, when Calvinism had in too many cases degenerated into Antinomianism. It has been seen how Whitefield with characteristic rashness declared that its author knew no more of Christianity than Mahomet; and afterwards, with equally characteristic candour, owned that he had been far too severe in his condemnation. Cowper called it 'that repository of self righteousness and pharisaical lumber.'[1] Berridge equally condemned it. Much more testimony to the same effect might be given. There was, then, ample room for a treatise which should aim at the same purpose as the 'Whole Duty of Man,' but which should enforce its teaching on different principles. This want the 'Complete Duty' supplied, and in its day supplied well. It was written from a Calvinistic point of view; but its Calvinism differed widely from that, for instance, of Romaine. A comparison between it and the 'Life, Walk, and Triumph of Faith' marks the decided difference between two types of Calvinists. Both books, it is presumed, were intended to be practical treatises; but, whereas the one treats but very little of directly practical duties, the full half—and the best and most interesting half of the other is exclusively concerned with them. Having fully stated in his opening chapters the distinctive doctrines upon which alone he thinks sound morality can be based, Venn in the rest of his treatise enters with the utmost minuteness into the practical duties of the Christian to God and man. Truthfulness, honesty, meekness, courtesy, candour, the relative duties in various capacities—of masters towards their servants and servants towards their masters, of parents towards their children and children towards their parents, and the like, are all fully dwelt upon.

For convenience' sake we have spoken of the *later* Evangelicalism as distinguished from the *earlier* Methodism. But it would be inaccurate to represent the one simply as the successor of the other. The two movements were, to a certain extent, contemporaneous, and were for a time so blended together that it is

[1] Southey's *Life of Cowper*, i. 117.

difficult to separate them. Besides the clergy already noticed, there were several others scattered throughout the country who clearly belonged to the Evangelicals rather than to the Methodists. Such a one was Walker of Truro (1714–1761), who, by his own personal work and by his influence over other clergy, contributed largely to the spread of the Evangelical revival in the West of England. Such a one was Adam of Winteringham, the author of a once very popular devotional book, entitled 'Private Thoughts,' and his friend and neighbour Archdeacon Bassett of Glentworth. Such a one was Augustus Toplady, about whom enough has been said in connection with the Calvinistic controversy. On the crucial test, which separated Methodism proper from Evangelicalism proper, these and several others of less note were decidedly on the side of Evangelicalism. While agreeing thoroughly with Methodist doctrines (we may waive the vexed question of Calvinism), they thoroughly disapproved of the Methodist practice of itinerancy, which they regarded as a mark of insubordination, a breach of Church order, and an unwarrantable interference with the parochial system.[1] We find Hervey, and Walker, and Adam all expostulating with Wesley on his irregularities, and endeavouring to persuade him, though quite ineffectually, to submit to Church discipline and listen to the commands of Church rulers. Wesley, on his part, thought that such clergy were a mere rope of sand. Berridge predicted that, after the death of the individuals, their congregations would be absorbed in the Dissenting sects. Neither seems to have contemplated the possibility of what actually took place, viz. the formation of a strong party within the Church, quite as much attached to parochial order and quite as obedient to the Church rulers as the highest of High Churchmen. It has been asserted, and apparently not without reason, that these early Evangelicals found more sympathy among the pious Dissenters than they did among the Methodists, though they were constantly confounded with the latter.[2]

It was not, however, until the later years of the century that the scattered handful of clergy who held these views swelled into a large and compact body, which, to this day, has continued to form a great and influential section of the Church of England.

The first name which claims our attention in this connection is that of *John Newton* (1725 1807). No character connected with the Evangelical revival is presented to us with greater vividness and distinctness than his, and no character is on the whole a more lovable one. It has frequently been objected that

[1] See 'Biographical Sketches' in the *Christian Observer* for 1877.
[2] *Christian Observer* for February, 1877.

Christians of the Puritan and Evangelical schools, when describing their conversion, have been apt to exaggerate their former depravity. There may be some force in the objection, but it does not apply to John Newton. The moral and even physical degradation from which he was rescued can hardly be exaggerated. An infidel, a blasphemer, a sensualist, a corrupter of others, despised by the very negroes among whom his lot was cast, such was Newton in his earlier years. Those who desire to learn the details of this part of his life may be referred to his own harrowing—sometimes even repulsive—narrative, or to the biography written by his accomplished friend, Mr. Cecil. None of the Evangelical leaders passed through such an ordeal as he did; but the experience which he underwent as a slave-trader, and as the menial servant of a slave-trader, stood him in good stead after he had become an exemplary and respected clergyman. It enabled him to enter into and sympathise with the rude temptations of others; he had felt them all himself; he had yielded to them, and by the grace of God he had overcome them. The grossest of profligates found in him one who had sunk to a lower depth than themselves; and so they dared to unburthen their very hearts to him; and few who did so went away without relief. They would hardly have ventured to make so clean a breast before men who, like the majority of the Evangelical leaders, had always lived at least outwardly respectable lives; and if they had ventured to do so, these good men could hardly have appreciated their difficulties. But Newton had been one of them; scarcely a sin could they mention but he had either committed it himself, or been brought into close contact with those who *had* committed it. It was not so much as a preacher that Newton's forte lay; for though his sermons were full of matter and read well, it is said that they were not well delivered; and, perhaps, they are in themselves a little heavy, and deficient in the lighter graces of oratory. But as an adviser and personal director of those who had been heinous sinners, and had learnt to cry in the agony of their souls, 'What must I do to be saved?' Newton was unrivalled.[1] Nor was it only to the profligate that Newton's advice was seasonable and effective. Many who were living outwardly decorous lives derived inestimable benefit from it. Thomas Scott, Joseph Milner, William Cowper, William Wilberforce, and Hannah More were all more or less influenced by him. Newton was in every way adapted to be a spiritual adviser. In spite of his rough exterior he was a man of a very affectionate nature. This at his worst he never lost. In his darkest hours there was still one bright spot.

[1] See, *inter alia*, *William Wilberforce, his Friends, and his Times*, by J. C. Colquhoun, pp. 90, 98.

His love for Mary Catlett, first conceived when she was a child of thirteen, continued unabated to the day of her death and beyond her death. This plain, downright, homely man not only professed, but felt, an ardour of attachment which no hero of romance ever exceeded. His conscience reproached him for making an idol of his 'dear Mary.' Oddly enough, he took the public into his confidence. The publication of his 'Letters to a Wife,' breathing as they do the very spirit of devoted love, in his own life-time, may have been in questionable taste; but they indicate a simplicity very characteristic of the man. His letters upon her death to Hannah More and others are singularly plaintive and beautiful; and the verses which he wrote year by year on each anniversary of that sad event are more touching than better poetry.[1]

His name is specially connected with that of the poet Cowper. At first sight it would seem difficult to conceive a greater contrast than that which existed between the two men. Cowper was a highly nervous, shy, delicate man, who was most at home in the company of ladies in their drawing-room, who had had no experience whatever of external hardships, who had always lived a simple, retired life, and had shrunk with instinctive horror from the grosser vices. He was from his youth a refined and cultured scholar, and had associated with scarcely any but the pure and gentle. Newton was a plain, downright sailor, with nerves of iron, and a mind and spirit as robust as his frame. He had little inclination for the minor elegancies of life. He was almost entirely self-taught. What could there be in common between two such men?

In point of fact, these differences were all merely superficial. Penetrate a little deeper, and it will be found that in reality they were thoroughly kindred spirits. On the one side, Cowper's apparent effeminacy was all on the surface; his mind, when it was not unstrung, was of an essentially masculine and vigorous type. All his writings, including his delightful letters as well as his poetry, are remarkably free from mawkishness and mere sentimentality. On the other side, Newton's roughness was merely superficial. Within that hard exterior there beat a heart as tender and delicate as that of any child. It is the greatest mistake in the world to confound this genial, sociable man, full of quiet, racy humour, smoking that memorable pipe of his, which was the occasion of so much harmless fun between him and Cowper and the worthy sisters More—with the hard surly Puritan of the Balfour of Burley type. Newton had a point of

[1] See Newton's *Works*, in six volumes, edited by Cecil, *passim*.

contact with every side of Cowper's character. He had at least as strong a sympathy with the author of 'John Gilpin' as with the author of 'The Task.' For one of the most marked features of John Newton's intellectual character was his strong sense of humour. Many of his 'ana' rival those of Dr. Johnson himself; and now and then, even in his sermons, glimpses of his humorous tendency peep forth.[1] But his wit never degenerated into buffoonery, and was never unseasonable like that of Berridge and Grimshaw. Again, he could fully appreciate Cowper's taste for classical literature; considering how utterly Newton's education had been neglected, it is perfectly marvellous how he managed, under the most unfavourable circumstances, to acquire no contemptible knowledge of the great classical authors. Add to all this that Newton's native kindness of heart made him feel very deeply for the misfortune of his friend, and it will be no longer a matter of wonder that there should have been so close a friendship between the two men. It is readily granted that there was a certain amount of awe mingled with the love which Cowper bore to Newton, but Newton was the very last man in the world to abuse the gentle poet's confidence.

The part which *William Cowper* (1731–1800) took in the Evangelical movement is too important to pass unnoticed. The shy recluse of Olney and Weston Underwood contributed in his way more towards the spread of the Evangelical revival than even Whitefield did with all his burning eloquence, or Wesley with all his indomitable activity. For those who despised Whitefield and Wesley as mere vulgar fanatics, those who would never have read a word of what Newton or Romaine wrote, those who were too much prejudiced to be affected by the preaching of any of the Evangelical clergy, could not refrain from reading the works of one who was without question the first poet of his day. This is not the place to criticise Cowper's poetry; but it may be remarked that that poetry exercised an influence greater than that which its intrinsic merits—great though these were—could have commanded, owing to the fact that Cowper was the first who gave expression to the reaction which had set in against the artificial school of Pope. Men were becoming weary of the smooth rhymes, the brilliant antitheses, the flash and the glitter, the constant straining after effect, carrying with it a certain air of unreality, which had long been in vogue. They welcomed with delight a poet who wrote in a more easy and natural, if a

[1] See especially his fourth sermon on 'The Messiah' in the series suggested by Handel's Oratorio. There is not a taint of irreverence, but no one but a man who had an exquisite sense of humour could have written the first two pages of that sermon.

rougher and less correct, style. Cowper was, in fact, the father of a new school of poetry—a school of which Southey, and Coleridge, and Wordsworth were in the next generation distinguished representatives. But almost all that Cowper wrote (at least of original composition) was subservient to one great end. He was essentially a Christian poet, and in a different sense from that in which Milton, and George Herbert, and Young were Christian poets. As Socrates brought philosophy, so Cowper brought religious poetry down from the clouds to dwell among men. Not only does a vein of piety run through all his poetry, but the attentive reader cannot fail to perceive that his main object in writing was to recommend practical, experimental religion of the Evangelical type. He himself gives us the keynote to all his writings in a beautiful passage,[1] in which he describes the want which he strove to supply.

> Pity, religion has so seldom found
> A skilful guide into poetic ground !
> The flowers would spring where'er she deigned to stray,
> And every muse attend her in her way.
> Virtue, indeed, meets many a rhyming friend,
> And many a compliment politely penned ;
> But unattired in that becoming vest
> Religion weaves for her, and half undressed,
> Stands in the desert, shivering and forlorn,
> A wintry figure, like a withered thorn.

But while he never loses sight of his grand object, Cowper's poems are not mere sermons in verse. He not only passes without an effort 'from grave to gay, from lively to severe,' but he blends them together with most happy effect. Gifted with a rare sense of humour, with exquisite taste, and with a true appreciation of the beautiful both in nature and art, he enlists all these in the service of religion. While the reader is amused with his wit and charmed with his descriptions, he is instructed, proselytised, won over to Evangelicalism almost without knowing it. 'My sole drift,' wrote Cowper in 1781, a little before the publication of his first volume,[2] 'is to be useful ; a point at which, however, I know I should in vain aim, unless I could be likewise entertaining. I have, therefore, fixed these two strings to my bow ; and by the help of both have done my best to send my arrow to the mark. My readers will hardly have begun to laugh before they will be called upon to correct that levity and peruse me with a more serious air. I cast a sidelong glance at the goodliking of the world at large, more for the sake of their advantage

[1] See Taylor's *Life of Cowper*, p. 426. [2] Id. p. 139.

and instruction than their praise. They are children; if we give them physic we must sweeten the rim of the cup with honey,' &c. To this principle he faithfully adhered in all his original poems. He felt the difficulty of the task which he had proposed to himself. He knew that he would have to break through a thick, hard crust of prejudice before he could reach his readers' hearts. He saw the necessity of peculiar delicacy of treatment, lest he should repel those whom he desired to attract. And nothing marks more strongly the high estimate which Cowper formed of Newton's tact and good judgment than the fact that the poet asked his friend to write the preface to his first volume. When he made this request he was fully aware that any injudiciousness, any want of tact, would be fatal to his object. But he applied to Newton expressly because he thought him the only friend who would not betray him by any such mistakes.

It is from the nature of the case difficult to estimate the services which Cowper's poetry rendered to the cause which lay nearest to the poet's heart. Poems do not make converts in the sense that sermons do; nevertheless, it is doing no injustice to the preaching power of the Evangelical school to assert that Cowper's poetry left a deeper mark upon the Church than any sermons did. Through this means Evangelical theology in its most attractive form gained access into quarters into which no Evangelical preachers could ever have penetrated. The bitterest enemy of Evangelicalism who read Cowper's poems could not deny that here was at least one man, a scholar and a gentleman, with a refined and cultured mind and a brilliant wit, who was not only favourably disposed to the obnoxious doctrines, but held them to be the very life and soul of Christianity. Of course, to those who wished to find it, there was the ready answer that the man was a madman. But the mind which produced 'The Task' was certainly not unsound, at least at the time when it conceived and executed that fine poem. Every reader of discernment, though he might not agree with the religious views expressed in it, was obliged to confess that the author's powers were of the first order; and if William Cowper did no other service to the Evangelical cause, this alone was an inestimable one—that he convinced the world that the Evangelical system was not incompatible with true genius, ripe scholarship, sparkling wit, and a refined and cultivated taste.

If pilgrimages formed part of the Evangelical course, the little town or large village of Olney should have attracted as many pilgrims as S. Thomas's shrine at Canterbury did five centuries before. For with this dull, uninteresting spot are connected the

names not only of Newton, and Cowper, and Mrs. Unwin, but also those of two successive vicars, Mr. Moses Brown and Mr. Bean, both worthy specimens of Evangelicals, and last, but by no means least, the name of Scott, the commentator.

Thomas Scott (1747—1821) was the spiritual son of Newton, and succeeded him in the curacy of Olney. There was a curious family likeness between the two men. Both were somewhat rough diamonds. The metal in both cases was thoroughly genuine; but perhaps Newton took polish a little more easily than Scott. Both were self-taught men, and compensated for the lack of early education by extraordinary application. Although Scott did not pass through so terrible an ordeal as Newton, still he had a sufficiently large experience, both of the moral evils and outward hardships of life, to give him a very wide sympathy. Both were distinguished for a plain, downright, manly independence, both of thought and life; both were thoroughly unselfish and disinterested; both held a guarded Calvinism without the slightest tincture of Antinomianism; both lived, after their conversion, singularly pure and blameless lives; both struggled gallantly against the pressure of poverty, though Scott was the more severely tried of the two. As a writer, perhaps Scott was the more powerful; Newton wrote nothing equal to the 'Commentary' or the 'Force of Truth;' on the other hand, there was a tenderness, a geniality, and, above all, a very strong sense of humour in Newton which were wanting in Scott. Scott had not the popular qualities of Newton, a deficiency of which he was himself fully conscious; but he was a noble specimen of a Christian, and deserved a much wider recognition than he ever received in this world. The 'Force of Truth' is one of the most striking treatises ever published by the Evangelical school, though we cannot go quite so far as to say, with Bishop Wilson, of Calcutta, that it is equal to the 'Confessions of Augustine.' It is simply a frank and artless but very forcible account of the various stages in the writer's mental and spiritual career, through which he was led to the adoption of that moderate Calvinism in which he found a permanent home. The treatise is specially interesting because it contains the history of a spiritual progress through which, in all probability, many (*mutatis mutandis*) passed in the eighteenth century. During the earlier years of his ministerial career Scott wavered between Socinianism and Arianism, and he showed the same conscientious disinterestedness which distinguished him through life, by sacrificing his chance of preferment, at a time when his circumstances sorely needed it, because he could not with a clear conscience sign those articles which plainly declared the doctrine of the Trinity. Slowly and laboriously, and without

help from any living man, except perhaps Newton, whose share in the matter will be noticed presently, Scott worked his way from point to point until he was finally established in the Evangelical faith. Burnet's 'Pastoral Care,' Hooker's 'Discourse on Justification,' Beveridge's 'Sermons,' Law's 'Serious Call' (of course), Venn's 'Essay on the Prophecy of Zacharias,' Hervey's 'Theron and Aspasio,' and De Witsius' 'Two Covenants,' contributed each its share towards the formation of his opinions. He describes with the utmost candour his obstinacy, his prejudices, and his self-sufficiency. Even while he was adopting one by one the obnoxious doctrines, he made amends by sneering at and publicly abusing the Methodists for holding those remaining doctrines which he still denied, till at last he became in all points a consistent Calvinistic Methodist (so called).[1] The 'Force of Truth' enables us to estimate at their proper value the judiciousness, forbearance, and gentleness of Newton. Scott tells us that he had heard of Newton as a benevolent, disinterested, inoffensive person, and a laborious minister.' 'But,' he adds, 'I looked upon his religious sentiments as rank fanaticism, and entertained a very contemptible opinion of his abilities, natural and acquired.' He heard him preach, and 'made a jest of his sermon;' he read one of his publications, and thought the greater part of it whimsical, paradoxical, and unintelligible. He entered into correspondence with him, hoping to draw him into controversy. 'The event,' he says, 'by no means answered my expectations. He returned a very friendly and long answer to my letter, in which he carefully avoided the mention of those doctrines which he knew would offend me. He declared that he believed me to be one who feared God and was under the teaching of his Holy Spirit; that he gladly accepted my offer of friendship, and was no way inclined to dictate to me.' In this spirit the correspondence continued. 'I held my purpose,' writes Scott, 'and he his. I made use of every endeavour to draw him into controversy, and filled my letters with definitions, enquiries, arguments, objections, and consequences, requiring explicit answers. He, on the other hand, shunned everything controversial as much as possible, and filled his letters with the most useful and least offensive instructions.' The letters to 'the Rev. T. S.' in Newton's correspondence fully bear out all that Scott here relates; and one scarcely knows which to admire most, the truly Christian forbearance of the older man, or the truly Christian avowal of his faults by the younger. The whole of Newton's subsequent intercourse with his spiritual son and successor at

[1] Not, of course, a 'Methodist' as distinguished from an 'Evangelical,' but according to the indiscriminate use of the term common in his day.

Olney indicates the same Christian and considerate spirit. Newton had, on the whole, been very popular at Olney. Scott was unpopular. There are few more delicate relationships than that of a popular clergyman to his unpopular successor, especially when the former still keeps up an intimate connection with his quondam parishioners. Such was the relationship between Newton and Scott; and Newton showed rare tact and true Christian courtesy under the delicate circumstances. Cowper was, perhaps, not likely to welcome very warmly any successor to his beloved Newton. At any rate, he appears never to have cordially appreciated Scott. Scott complains, not without reason, of the poet charging him with *scolding* the people at Olney, when neither he nor Mrs. Unwin, nor their more respectable friends, had ever heard him preach.[1] Still the coldness between the poet and the new curate could hardly have been so great as Southey represents it, for Scott tells us that 'The Force of Truth' was revised by Mr. Cowper, and as to style and externals considerably improved by his advice.[2]

Though Scott was unpopular at Olney, it must not be supposed that the fault was altogether his. Possibly he may not have had the elements in his character which, under any circumstances, could have made him popular. Indeed, he frankly owns that he had not. 'Some things,' he writes, 'requisite for popularity I would not have if I could, and others I could not have if I would.'[3] But at Olney his unpopularity redounded to his credit. No man could have done his duty there without being unpopular. The evils against which Scott had to contend were of a more subtle and complicated kind than simple irreligion and immorality. Spiritual pride, and the combination of a high profession with a low practice, were the dominant sins of the place.

Scott's warfare against the perversions of Calvinism forms a conspicuous feature in his ministerial career. On his removal to the chaplaincy of the Lock Hospital in London, he met with the same troubles as at Olney, on a larger scale, and in an aggravated form. 'Everything,' he writes, 'conduced to render me more and more unpopular, not only at the Lock, but in every part of London . . . . but my most distinguishing reprehensions of those who perverted the doctrines of the Gospel to Antinomian purposes, and my most awful warnings, were the language of compassionate love, and were accompanied by many tears and prayers.'[4] His printed sermons show us how strongly he felt the necessity of making a bold stand against the pernicious principles of some of the 'professors' who attended his ministry.

[1] *Life of Scott*, 216.
[2] Id. 127.
[3] Id. 261.
[4] Id. 238.

It required far greater moral courage to wage such a warfare as this than to fight against open sin and avowed infidelity. And when it is also remembered that Scott was a needy man, and that his bread depended upon his keeping on good terms with his congregation, and, moreover, that he had to fight the battle alone, for he was too much identified with the 'Methodists' to receive any help from the 'Orthodox,' his difficult position will be understood. But the brave man cared little for obloquy or desertion, or even the prospect of absolute starvation, when the cause of practical religion was at stake. There is very little doubt that it was. Many who called themselves Calvinists were making the doctrines of grace a cloak for the vilest hypocrisy; and the noble stand which Scott made against these deadly errors gives him a better claim to the title of 'Confessor' than many to whom the name has been given.

In spite of opposition, the good man worked on, with very small remuneration. His professional income (and he had little or nothing else) hardly exceeded 100*l.* a year. For this miserable stipend he officiated four times every Sunday in two churches, between which he had to walk fourteen miles, and ministered daily to a most disheartening class of patients in a hospital. To eke out his narrow income he undertook to write annotations on the Scriptures, which were to come out weekly, and to be completed in a hundred numbers. The payment stipulated was the magnificent sum of a guinea a number! This was the origin of the famous Commentary. There is no need to make many remarks on this well-known work. As a practical and devotional commentary it did not perhaps attain to the permanent popularity of Matthew Henry's commentary, and in point of erudition and acuteness it is not equal to that of Adam Clarke. But it holds an important place of its own in the Evangelical literature of its class, and its usefulness extended beyond the limits of the Evangelical school. Its immediate success was enormous, perhaps almost unparalleled in literary history, or at least in the history of works of similar magnitude; 12,000 copies of the English edition and 25,250 of the American, were produced in the lifetime of the author. The retail price of the English copies amounted to 67,600*l.*, and of the American 132,300*l.* One would have been glad to learn that the author himself was placed in easy circumstances by the sale of his work. But this was not the case; on the contrary, it involved him for some time in very serious embarrassments. Scott died, as he lived, a poor man. But one is thankful to know that his old age was passed in comparative peace. His change from London to Aston Sandford, if it was not a remunerative, was at least a refreshing change. In the pure air of

his country living he was liberated from the unsatisfactory wranglings, the bitter jealousies, and vexatious interference of his London patrons, whose self-sufficiency and spiritual pride were, like those of many amateur theologians at the present day, in inverse ratio to their knowledge and ability. He had the satisfaction of seeing a son grow up to be worthy of his father. To that son we are indebted for the very interesting biography of Thomas Scott, a biography in which filial piety has not tempted the writer to lose sight of good sense and honesty, and which is therefore not a mere panegyric, but a true and vivid account of its subject.

From Newton and Scott we naturally turn to one who was the friend of both and the biographer of the former.

Richard Cecil (1748–1810) differed widely in point of natural character from his two friends. He was perhaps the most cultured and refined of all the Evangelical leaders. Nature had endowed him with an elegant mind, and he improved his natural gifts by steady application. He was not trained in the school of outward adversity as Newton and Scott had been; but he had trials of his own, mostly of an intellectual character, which were sharp enough. His delicate health prevented him from taking so busy a part as his friends did in the Evangelical movement. But in a different way he contributed in no slight degree to its success. There was a stately dignity, both in his character and in his style of writing, which was very impressive. His 'Remains' show traces of a scholarly habit of mind, a sense of humour, a grasp of leading principles, a liberality of thought, and capacity of appreciating good wherever it might be found, which render it, short though it is, a valuable contribution to Evangelical literature.

There are yet two names among the clerical leaders of the Evangelical party in the last century which were at least as influential as any which have been mentioned. The two brothers, Joseph and Isaac Milner, were both in their different ways very notable men.

Joseph Milner, the elder brother (1744–1797), lived a singularly uneventful life. After having taken a good degree at Cambridge, he was appointed, at a very early age, headmaster of the grammar school at Hull, in which town he spent the remainder of his comparatively short life. He was in course of time made Vicar of North Ferriby, a village near Hull; and, first, lecturer, and then, only a few weeks before his death, Vicar, of Holy Trinity, the parish church of Hull. Both his scholastic and ministerial careers were successful and useful, but do not call for any particular notice. His Calvinistic views rendered him for a time

unpopular, but he outlived his unpopularity, and died, at the age of fifty-three, generally respected, as he deserved to be.

But it is as a writer that Joseph Milner claims our chief regard. His 'Church History' may contend with Scott's 'Commentary,' for the first place among the Evangelical literature of the last century. The plan of this important work was a happy and an original one—original, that is, so far as execution was concerned; for the first idea was not original—it was suggested by a fragment written by Newton at Olney. Having observed with regret that most Church histories dwelt mainly, if not exclusively, upon the disputes of Christians, upon the various heresies and schisms which in all ages have distracted the Christian Church, Milner felt that they were calculated to impress their readers with a very unfavourable view of the Christian religion, as if the chief result of that religion had been to set men at variance with one another.[1] Mosheim, the fullest historian of the Church in that day, seemed to Milner a notable offender in this respect. Milner therefore purposed to write a 'History of the Church of Christ,' the main object of which should be to set forth the blessed effects which Christianity had produced in all, even the darkest ages, and which should touch but slightly and incidentally, and only so far as the subject absolutely required it, upon the heresies and disputes which formed the staple of most Church histories. His history, in fact, was to be a history of *real* not *nominal* Christians. He thought that too much had been said about ecclesiastical wickedness, and that Deists and Sceptics had taken advantage of this against Christians. Such a work was a 'desideratum,' and had the execution been equal to the conception, it would have been simply invaluable. If genuine piety, thorough honesty, a real desire to recognise good wherever it could be found, and a vast amount of information, in the amassing of which he was aided by a wonderfully tenacious memory and great industry, were sufficient to ensure success, Milner certainly possessed all these qualifications in an eminent degree. But in others, which are equally essential, he was deficient. In the first place, his work laboured under the fatal defect of dulness. Of all writers, perhaps the ecclesiastical historian has most need of a lively, racy style, of the art of selecting really prominent facts and representing them with vividness and picturesqueness. The nature of his subject is drier than that of the civil historian. He *must* write much

[1] See Milner's *History of the Church of Christ* (new ed. four vols. Cadell, 1834), *passim*, and especially Introduction, and vol. i. 110, 131, 136, 137, 156; ii. 415; iii. 73.

which to the majority of readers will be heavy reading, unless they are carried along by the grace and attractiveness of the composition. Milner has not the art of setting off his characters in the most effective manner. There is a want of spring and dash about his style which has prevented many from doing justice to his real merits.

Then again, he was rather too much of a partisan, to make a good historian. With every wish to give honour where honour was due, his mind was not evenly balanced enough for his task. Holding, as Milner did, the very strongest and most uncompromising views of the utter depravity of mankind, he can allow no good at all to what are termed 'mere moral virtues.' Indeed, he will hardly allow such virtues to be 'splendid sins.' He is far too honest to suppress facts, but his comments upon facts are often tinged with a quite unconscious unfairness. Thus, he admits the estimable qualities which Antoninus Pius possessed, but 'doubtless,' he adds, 'a more distinct and explicit detail of his life would lessen our admiration : something of the supercilious pride of the Grecian or of the ridiculous vain-glory of the Roman might appear.'[1]

A kindred but graver defect is Milner's incessant depreciation of all schools of philosophy. Instead of seeing in these great thinkers of antiquity a yearning after that light which Christianity gives, he can see in them nothing but the deadliest enmity to Christianity. 'The Church of Christ is abhorrent in its plan and spirit from the systems of proud philosophers.' 'Moral philosophy and metaphysics have ever been dangerous to religion. They have been found to militate against the vital truths of Christianity and corrupt the gospel in our times, as much as the cultivation of the more ancient philosophy corrupted it in early ages.' The minister of Christ is warned against 'deep researches into philosophy of any kind,' and much more to the same effect. It was this foolish manner of talking and writing which gave the impression that the religion which the Evangelicals recommended was a religion only fitted for persons of weak minds and imperfect education. Such sweeping and indiscriminate censures of 'human learning' (at least of one important branch of it) not only encouraged contemptuous opinions of Evangelicalism among its enemies, but also tended to make many of its friends think too lightly of those gifts which, after all, come as truly from 'the Father of lights' as those which are more strictly termed spiritual. It was a very convenient doctrine for those who could certainly never have attained to any degree of intellectual eminence, to

[1] i. 156.—See also i. 131, &c

think that they were quite on a level with those who could and did: nay, that they had the advantage on their side because intellectual eminence was a snare rather than a help to Christianity. It is all the more provoking to find such passages as those which have been quoted from Milner in Evangelical writings (and they are not uncommon) because the Evangelical leaders themselves were very far indeed from being deficient either in abilities or attainments. Perhaps none of them can be classed among the first order of divines; but those who assert that the Wesleys, Romaine, Newton, Scott, Cecil, and the Milners were fools and ignoramuses, only show their own folly and ignorance.

Another defect of Milner as a historian is, that he is rather too anxious 'to improve the occasion.' Whatever century he is treating of, he always seems to have one eye steadily fixed upon the latter part of the eighteenth century. He takes every possible and impossible opportunity of dealing a sideblow to the Arminians and Schismatics of his own day: [1] for Milner, though he was called a Methodist, was a most uncompromising stickler for every point of Church order.

His Calvinism led him to give undue prominence to those Christians of the past who held the same views. Thus, for instance, although the great Bishop of Hippo richly deserves all the honour which a Church historian can bestow upon him, yet surely he was not so immeasurably superior to the other Fathers, that he should have 145 pages devoted to him, while Chrysostom has only sixteen and Jerome only eleven. But 'the peculiar work for which Augustine was evidently raised up by Providence, was to restore the doctrines of divine grace to the Church.'

Having frankly owned these defects, we may now turn to the more pleasing task of recognising Milner's real merits.

Strong Protestant as Milner was, he showed a generous appreciation of the real good which existed in the Church of Rome: a most unusual liberality in theologians of the eighteenth century—High Church as well as Low. He warned his readers most seasonably, that they 'should not be prejudiced against the real Church, because she then [in the time of Gregory I.] wore a Roman garb,' for 'superstition to a certain degree may co-exist with the spirit of the Gospel.' And he certainly acted up to the spirit of his warning. Of course, his chief heroes are those who were more or less adverse to the claims of the Roman See, such as Grossteste, Bradwardine, Wickliff, and Jerome of Prague. But he can fully appreciate the merits of an Anselm, for instance, whose 'humble and penitent spirit consoles the soul with a glance of

[1] See i. 136, 137, 325, 457.

Christian faith in Christ;'[1] of Bernard, of whom he writes, 'There is not an essential doctrine of the Gospel which he did not embrace with zeal, defend by argument, and adorn by his life;'[2] of Bede, who 'alone knew more of true religion, both doctrinal and practical, than numbers of ecclesiastics put together at this day.' And he owns that 'our ancestors were undoubtedly much indebted, under God, to the Roman See.'[3]

The excellence of his plan, to which he faithfully adheres, might atone for more faults than Milner is guilty of. We may well bear with a few shortcomings in a Church history which, instead of perplexing the mind with the interminable disputes of professing Christians, makes it its main business to detect the spirit of Christ wherever it can be found. It is a real refreshment, no less than a real strengthening of our faith, to turn from Church histories which might be more correctly termed histories of the abuses and perversions of Christianity, to one which really is what it professes to be—a history of the good which Christianity has done.

Joseph Milner died when his history had only reached the middle of the thirteenth century; but his pen was taken up by a hand which was, at least, equally competent to wield it. The fourth volume of the history, carrying the work down to about the middle of the sixteenth century, was compiled by his younger brother Isaac, of whom we may now say a few words.

Isaac Milner (1751–1820) was the one solitary instance of an avowed and uncompromising adherent of the Evangelical school, in the last century, attaining any high preferment in the Church. Indeed, his claims could not have been ignored without glaring injustice. He was the Senior Wrangler of his year, and First Smith's Prizeman, and the epithet 'incomparabilis' was attached to his name in the Mathematical Tripos. He continued to reside at the University after he had taken his degree, and was appointed Professor of Mathematics, President of his college (Queen's), and finally, Dean of Carlisle. Isaac Milner's services to the Evangelical cause were invaluable. Holding a prominent position at Cambridge, he was able to establish a sort of School of the Prophets, where Evangelical ministers in embryo were trained in the system of their party. But, besides this, he helped the cause he had at heart by becoming a sort of general adviser and referee in cases of difficulty. For such an office he was admirably adapted. His reputation for erudition, and his high standing at Cambridge, commanded respect; and his sound, shrewd sense, his thorough straightforwardness and

[1] ii. 597, &c. [2] iii. 73. [3] ii. 441.

hatred of all cant and unreality, his genial manner and his decidedness, made his advice very effective. He acquired a reputation for conversational powers not much inferior in his own circle to that of Dr. Johnson in his; and this, no doubt, added to his influence.

There was only one man at Cambridge whose services to Evangelicalism at all equalled those of Isaac Milner. It need scarcely be said that that man was Charles Simeon, the voluntary performer of that work for which, of all others, our universities ought most carefully to provide, but which, at least during the eighteenth century, they most neglected—the training of our future clergymen. As Simeon's work, however, is more connected with the nineteenth than with the eighteenth century, it need not further be referred to.

It is difficult to know where to draw the line, in noticing the clerical leaders of the Evangelical party. If all the worthy men who helped on the cause were here commemorated, this chapter would swell into outrageous dimensions. Dr. Conyers of Helmsley, and subsequently of Deptford, the friend and brother-in-law of J. Thornton; Mr. Richardson of York, the intimate friend of Joseph Milner and the editor of his sermons; Mr. Stillingfleet of Hotham, another friend of Milner's; Mr. Jowett, a voluminous and once much admired writer, would claim at least a passing notice. But there is one more Evangelical clergyman whose work must not be ignored.

Thomas Robinson of Leicester (1749–1813) was the friend of all the Evangelical leaders of his day. Having taken his degree with credit at Cambridge—he was said to be the best *general* scholar of his time—he served for a short while the curacy of Witcham, a village near Cambridge. Here he raised, by his reputed Methodism, a sensation which extended to the whole neighbourhood, and even to the University itself. 'His tutor and friend, Mr. Postlethwaite, hearing that he was bent on turning Methodist, from the kindest motives took him seriously to task, exhorting him to beware, to consider what mischief the Methodists were doing, and at what a vast rate they were increasing. "Sir," said Robinson, "what do you mean by a Methodist? Explain, and I will ingenuously tell you whether I am one or not." This caused a puzzle and a pause. At last Mr. Postlethwaite said, "Come then, I'll tell you. I hear that in the pulpit you impress on the minds of your hearers, that they are to attend to your doctrines from the consideration that you will have to give an account of them, and of your treatment of them, at the Day of Judgment." "I am surprised," rejoined Robinson, "to hear this objected. It is true." Robinson got no further expla-

nation from the tutor, but that the increase of Methodism was an alarming thing.'[1] From Witcham, Robinson was removed to Leicester, where he spent the remainder of his life, and where he passed through very much the same sort of experience which attended most of the Evangelical clergy of the period: that is, his 'Methodistical' views raised great opposition at the outset; but he lived it down, became a very popular preacher, and took a leading part in every scheme for the amelioration of the temporal and spiritual condition of Leicester. Mr. Robinson was also well known as an author. His 'Christian System' and 'Scripture Characters' were once much read and much admired books, especially the former, which is still found in most libraries of divinity collected in the early part of the present century.

It was said above that Dean Milner was the solitary instance of an Evangelical clergyman of the last century, who gained any high preferment. Some may think that Beilby Porteus, Bishop of London, also formed an exception to the rule. But, strictly speaking, Bishop Porteus can scarcely be said to have identified himself with the Evangelical school. It is true that he did not share the prejudices which many of his brother prelates conceived against the Evangelical clergy, but, on the contrary, was on terms of the closest intimacy with many of them, and always used the commanding influence which his position gave him in their favour. He threw himself heartily into all their philanthropical schemes—the promotion of Sunday-schools, the agitation for the abolition of negro slavery, and the newly awakened zeal for foreign missions. But he never so far committed himself as to incur the reproach of Methodism; he did not bear the brunt of the battle as the Evangelicals did, and therefore can hardly be reckoned among their number.

Hitherto, our attention has been turned mainly to the *clergy* who took part in the Evangelical movement. But this sketch would be very imperfect if it failed to notice the eminent laymen who helped the cause. The two Thorntons, father and son, William Wilberforce, Lord Dartmouth, Lord Teignmouth and others, who regularly or occasionally attended the ministry of John Venn, the worthy Rector of Clapham, were called in derision, 'the Clapham sect.' The phrase implies a sort of reproach which was not deserved. These good men had no desire to form a sect. They were all, in their way, loyal sons of the Church of England, content with her liturgy, attached to her doctrines, and ready to conform to her order. Perhaps, like most laymen who take

[1] See the *Life of the Rev. T. Robinson, Vicar of St. Mary's, Leicester, and sometime Fellow of Trin. Coll., Camb.*, by Rev. E. T. Vaughan, p. 50, &c.

up strong views on theological subjects, they were inclined to be a little narrow. None of them had, or professed to have, the slightest pretensions to be called theologians. Still, they learned and practised thoroughly the true lessons of Christianity, and shed a lustre upon the Evangelical cause by the purity, disinterestedness, and beneficence of their lives.

Of the two Thorntons little need be said, except that they were wealthy merchants who in very truth looked upon their riches not as their own, but as talents entrusted to them for their Master's use. The princely liberality of these two good men was literally unbounded. It has been seen that the Evangelical clergy were almost to a man debarred from the emoluments of their profession, and lived in very straitened circumstances. The extent to which their lack was supplied by John and Henry Thornton is almost incredible. John Thornton regularly allowed Newton, during the sixteen years the latter was at Olney, 200*l.* a year for charitable purposes, and urged him to draw upon him for more when necessary. Henry Thornton, the son, is said to have divided his income into two parts, retaining only one-seventh for his own use, and devoting six-sevenths to charity; after he became the head of a family, he gave two-thirds away and retained one-third for himself and his family. It appeared after his death, from his accounts, that the amount he spent in the relief of distress in one of his earlier years considerably exceeded 9,000*l.*

The character and career of *William Wilberforce* (1759–1831) are too well known to need description: it will be sufficient here to touch upon those points in which the great philanthropist was directly concerned in the Evangelical revival. Only it should be distinctly borne in mind that the main work of his life cannot be separated from his Evangelical principles. His earnest efforts in behalf of the negro were as plainly the result of Evangelicalism as was the munificence of the Thorntons or the preaching of Venn. When Wilberforce was first impressed seriously, and was in doubt what plan of life to adopt, he consulted, like many others, John Newton. He could not have had recourse to a better adviser. Newton counselled him not to give up his proper position in the world, but to seek in it opportunities for employing his wealth, talents, and influence for his Master's work. The wise old man saw that the young enthusiast could help the cause far more effectually as a member of Parliament and friend of the Minister, than ever he could have done as a parochial clergyman or as an itinerant.[1] Hence, Wilberforce, instead of

[1] See *Wilberforce, His Friends, and His Times*, by J. C. Colquhoun, p. 102.

becoming a second Rowland Hill, as he might easily have been persuaded to do, became the staunch supporter of the Evangelical cause in Parliament, and the successful recommender of its principles in general society.

Evangelicalism had been gradually making its way upwards among the social strata. The earlier Methodism had been influential almost exclusively among the lower and lower middle classes. Good Lady Huntingdon's efforts are a proof, rather than an exception to the rule, that Methodism in this form was out of harmony with the tastes of the upper classes, and had little practical efficacy with them. But Evangelicalism was beginning to excite, not a mere passing curiosity such as had been created by Whitefield's preaching, but a really practical interest among the aristocracy. No one contributed more largely to this result than William Wilberforce. Here was a man of rare social talents, a thorough gentleman, a brilliant orator, and an intimate friend of some of the most eminent men of the day, not only casting in his lot with the 'calumniated school' (as Hannah More calls it), but straining every nerve to recommend its principles. It has been said, indeed, that Wilberforce was not, properly speaking, an Evangelical.[1] This is so far true, that Wilberforce did not identify himself entirely with any religious party, and that he was, as Thomas Scott observes, 'rather afraid of Calvinism.' But it would be robbing Evangelicalism of its due, to deny that Wilberforce's deep religious convictions were solely derived (so far as human agency was concerned) from the Evangelical school. He was early impressed by the preaching, and perhaps the private counsel, of his schoolmaster, Joseph Milner. These impressions were afterwards revived and deepened by his intercourse with Isaac Milner, whom he accompanied on a continental tour just before the decisive change in his character. He was then led to consult John Newton, and was advised by him to attend the ministry of Thomas Scott at the Lock Hospital, from which he himself tells us that he derived great benefit; and he afterwards attended regularly the ministry of J. Venn. Surely these facts speak for themselves. The religious character of Wilberforce was moulded by the Evangelical clergy, and he was himself to all intents and purposes an Evangelical.

If further proof were needed, it would only be necessary to refer to Wilberforce's best known publication, entitled in full, 'A Practical View of the prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians in the Higher and Middle Classes in this country, contrasted with real Christianity.' No book, since the publica-

[1] Sir James Stephen, *Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography*.

tion of the 'Serious Call,' had exerted so wide and deep an influence as the 'Practical View.' Wilberforce took up very much the same position as Law had done; and it would be difficult to award higher praise to the later work than to say, as one justly may, that it will bear comparison with the earlier. Not that as mere compositions the two works can for one moment be compared. In depth of thought, strength of argument, and beauty of language, Law's is immeasurably superior. But, on the other hand, Wilberforce had on many points a distinct advantage. To begin with, the mere fact that the 'Practical View' was written by a layman—and such a layman!—gave it a weight which no book of the kind written by a clergyman could possess.[1] The force of the latter might always be broken by the objection that the writer was swayed by professional bias, and that his arguments, whatever might be their intrinsic merits, must be taken *cum grano* by the lay mind. But besides this 'coign of vantage' from which Wilberforce wrote, there were also points in the books themselves in which, for the purposes for which they were written, the preference must be given to the later work. It was not unnaturally objected against Law, that he did not sufficiently base his arguments upon distinctly Gospel motives. No such objection can be raised against Wilberforce. Then again, though Wilberforce was a thoroughly unworldly man, he was in the good sense of the term a thorough man of the world, and knew by experience what course of argument would tell most with such men. What Law writes from mere theory, Wilberforce writes from practical knowledge. It would be difficult to conceive men of powerful intellect like Dr. Johnson and John Wesley, who had really thought deeply and seriously on such subjects, being so strongly affected by the 'Practical View' as these were by the 'Serious Call.' But men of powerful intellect who had thought deeply and seriously on religious subjects, were rare. The 'Practical View' is strong enough food for the general reader, while at the same time its unpretentious earnestness disarmed the criticism and won the hearts of men of genius like Edmund Burke. Wilberforce was no theologian; he was simply a good man who read his New Testament in a guileless spirit, and expostulated affectionately with those who, professing to take that book as their standard, were living lives plainly repugnant to its principles. The success

[1] 'Mr. Wilberforce's "Practical View,"' writes Thomas Scott, 'is a most noble and manly stand for the Gospel; full of good sense and most useful observations on subjects quite out of our line, and in all respects fitted for usefulness; and coming from such a man, it will probably be read by many thousands who can by no means be brought to attend either to our preaching or writings, especially the rich.'—*Life of T. Scott*, 341.

of Wilberforce's attempt was as great as it was unexpected. The publisher had so poor an opinion of the project, that he would consent to issue five hundred copies only on condition that Wilberforce would give his name. But the first edition was sold off in a few days; within half-a-year the book had passed through five editions, and it has now passed through more than fifty. The rest of Wilberforce's useful life, extending as it did some way into the nineteenth century, does not fall within the scope of the present inquiry.

Among Evangelical laymen, Lord Dartmouth held an honoured place. He did good service to the cause by advocating its interests both among the nobility and at Court; he was one of the very few who had the opportunity and will to advance the Evangelical clergy; and among others, he had the honour of promoting John Newton to the rectory of S. Mary Woolnoth.[1] He himself was a standing witness that 'Methodism' was not a religion merely for the coarse and unrefined, for he was himself so polished a gentleman that Richardson is reputed to have said that 'he would have realised his own idea of Sir Charles Grandison, if he had not been a Methodist.' It was Lord Dartmouth of whom Cowper wrote, 'he wears a coronet and prays:' an implied reflection upon a large order, which the poet was scarcely justified in making.

Lord Teignmouth was another Evangelical nobleman; but, strictly speaking, he does not come within the range of our subject; for it was not until the nineteenth century had commenced that he settled at Clapham, and became a distinguished member of the so-called Clapham sect, and the first president of the newly-formed Bible Society.

Among Evangelical laymen are we to place the revered name of Samuel Johnson His prejudices against Whitefield and the early Methodists have already been noticed; and the supposed antagonism between 'Methodism' and 'orthodoxy' would probably always have prevented one so intensely orthodox from fully identifying himself with the movement. But, without entering into the controversy which raged, so to speak, round the body of the good old man, there can be little doubt that towards the close of his life he was largely influenced by the Evangelical doctrines. His well-known fear of death laid him open to the influence of those who had clearly learned to count the last enemy as a friend; and there is no reason to doubt the story of his last illness, which rests upon unimpeachable testimony. 'My dear doctor,' he said to Dr. Brocklesby, 'believe a dying man: there is no salvation

[1] Newton's 'Letters to a Nobleman,' published in his works, were addressed to Lord Dartmouth.

but in the sacrifice of the Son of God.' 'I offer up my soul to the great and merciful God. I offer it full of pollution, but in full assurance that it will be cleansed in the blood of the Redeemer.'[1]

It will have been noticed that, with the exception of Lady Huntingdon, no female has been mentioned as having taken any prominent part in the Evangelical Revival. The mother of the Wesleys, Mrs. Fletcher, Mrs. Newton, Mrs. Cecil, and perhaps Mrs. C. Wesley, were all excellent specimens of Evangelical Christians; but their influence was exercised solely in private. Neither by writing nor in any other way did they come prominently forward. This is all the more noteworthy, because, so far as the principles of Evangelicalism were concerned, there was no reason why there should not have been many Lady Huntingdons among the Evangelical leaders. That there were not, is, perhaps, owing to the fact that there was a certain robustness of character common to all the chiefs of the party. One can scarcely conceive Venn, or Newton,[2] or Scott, or the Milners being led by women. There is, however, one exception to the rule.

Hannah More (1745–1833), by her writings and by her practical work in a sphere where such work was sorely needed, won an honourable place among the Evangelical worthies. Her accomplishments and attainments, her ready wit and social talents, gave her a place in society higher than that to which her birth entitled her, long before she came under the influence of the Evangelical party. It was by slow degrees that she embraced one by one the peculiar tenets of that school.[3] Perhaps to the very end

[1] See *Life and Correspondence of Mrs. Hannah More*, by W. Roberts, Esq., i. 395. The *Quarterly Review* vehemently combated the notion of Dr. Johnson's conversion. In reference to the passage in Roberts' *Life of H. More*, it said, 'This attempt to persuade us that Dr. Johnson's mind was not made up as to the great fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion, until it was enforced on him *in extremis* by sectarian or Methodistical zeal, cannot redound to the credit of Mr. Roberts' understanding,' &c. Those who care to enter into this bygone controversy may be referred to the *Christian Observer* for May 1843, pp. 281–287.

[2] One of Newton's bon-mots was, 'The place of honour in an army is not with the baggage or among the women.'

[3] See one of Newton's characteristically tender and sympathetic letters in answer to Hannah More's description of her spiritual state: 'What you are pleased to say, my dear madam, of the state of your mind, I understand perfectly well; I praise God on your behalf, and I hope I shall earnestly pray for you. I have stood upon that ground myself. I see what you want, to set you quite at ease; and though *I* cannot give it you, I trust that He who has already taught you what to desire will in His own best time do everything for you and in you which is necessary to make you as happy as is compatible with our present state of infirmity and warfare; but He must be waited *on* and waited *for*, to do this.' Hannah More had before this expressed her liking for Newton's 'Cardiphonia,

she never thoroughly identified herself with it, though her religious character was unquestionably formed under Evangelical influences. She formed a sort of link between Evangelicalism and the outer world. The intimate friend of David and Mrs. Garrick, of Dr. Johnson, of Horace Walpole, of Bishop Horne and Bishop Shute Barrington on the one hand, of John Newton, Wilberforce, the two Thorntons and Bishop Porteus on the other, she had points of contact with people of very different ways of thinking. It was this wide sympathy which enabled her to gain the ear of the public. 'You have a great advantage, madam,' wrote Newton to her; 'there is a circle by which what you write will be read; and which will hardly read anything of a religious kind that is not written by you.'[1] The popularity of her writings, which were very numerous, was extraordinary. Her 'Thoughts on the Manners of the Great' (1788) showed much moral courage. It was published anonymously, not because she was afraid of being known as the author, but simply because 'she hoped it might be attributed to a better person, and so might produce a greater effect.' The secret of the authorship was, however, soon discovered, and the effect was not spoiled. To the credit also of the fashionable world, it must be added that her popularity was not diminished. The success of her effort exceeded her most sanguine expectations. Seven large editions were sold in a few months, the second in little more than a week, the third in four hours. Its influence was traceable in the abandonment of many of the customs which it attacked.[2] In 1790 a sort of sequel appeared, entitled 'An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World,' which was bought up and read as eagerly as its predecessor. Nine years later another work on a kindred subject, entitled 'Strictures on Female Education,' was equally successful. Nor was it only on the subject of the higher classes that Hannah More was an effective writer. The wild licence of the French Revolution, while it filled sober, respectable people with perhaps an extravagant alarm, seemed at one time not unlikely to spread its contagion among the disaffected classes in England. One result was, the dissemination among the multitude of cheap literature full of speculative infidelity, as well as of abuse of the constituted authorities in this country. To furnish an antidote, Hannah More published, in 1792, a popular work entitled 'Village Politics, by Will Chip,' the object of which was to check the spread of French revolutionary principles among the lower classes. So great was the effect of this work that it was said by some, with a little exaggeration, no doubt, to have

though not for every sentiment or expression which it contains.' See Roberts' *Life*, i. 236.

[1] Roberts, ii. 260. [2] See *Life of H. More*, by H. Thompson, p. 81.

contributed essentially to prevent a revolution in England. Her success in this department of literature encouraged her to write a series of tracts which she published periodically, until 1798, under the title of the 'Cheap Repository Tracts.' Hannah More was well fitted for this latter work by her practical experience among the poor. Like most of the Evangelicals, she was a thorough worker. The spiritual destitution of Cheddar and the neighbourhood so affected her, that she formed the benevolent design of establishing schools for the children and religious instruction for the grown-up. Such efforts are happily so common at the present day, that it is difficult to realise the moral courage and self-denial which the carrying out of such a plan involved, or the difficulties with which the projector had to grapple. Some parents objected to their children attending the schools, lest Miss More should acquire legal control over them and sell them as slaves. Others would not allow the children to go unless they were paid for it. Of course, the cuckoo-cry of Methodism was raised. The farmers were bitterly opposed to the education of their labourers, and the clergy, though generally favourable, were not always so. But Miss More was not without friends. Her sister Patty was an invaluable assistant. Wilberforce and Thornton helped her with their purses. Newton, Bishop Porteus and other clergy strengthened her with their counsel and rendered her personal assistance; and at the close of the eighteenth century, the neighbourhood of Cowslip Green wore a very different aspect from what it had worn twenty years earlier.

If we were to judge of Hannah More's writings by their popularity, and the undoubted effects which they produced, or by the testimony which men of approved talents and discernment have borne to their value, we should place her in the very first rank of eighteenth century writers. 'Her style and manner are confessedly superior to those of any moral writer of the age.' She is 'one of the most illustrious females that ever was in the world.' 'One of the most truly Evangelical divines of this whole age, perhaps almost of any age not apostolic.' Bishop Porteus actually recommended her writings both in a sermon and in a charge. A feeling of disappointment will probably be raised in most readers who turn from these extravagant eulogies to the works themselves. They are full of somewhat vapid truisms, and their style is too ornate for the present age. Like so many writers of her day, she wrote Johnsonese rather than English. She loved long words, and amplified where she should have compressed. However, it is an ungracious task to criticise one who did good work in her time. After all, the truest test of the merits of a writer who wrote with the single object that Hannah More did, is the effect

she produced. Her writings were once readable and very influential. If the virtue now appears to have gone out of them, we may be thankful that it lasted so long as it was needed.

To conclude this long chapter. If any think that the picture here drawn of the leaders of the Evangelical Revival is too highly coloured, and that in this, as in all human efforts, frailties and mistakes might be discovered in abundance, the writer can only reply that he has not knowingly concealed any infirmities to which these good men were subject, though he frankly admits that he has touched upon them lightly and reluctantly. He feels that they were the salt of the earth in their day; that their disinterestedness, their moral courage in braving obloquy and unpopularity, their purity of life, the spirituality of their teaching, and the world of practical good they did among a neglected people, render them worthy of the deepest respect. It would have been an ungracious task ruthlessly to lay bare and to descant upon their weaknesses. That was done mercilessly by their contemporaries and those of the next generation. There is more need now to redress the balance by giving due weight to their many excellences.

It seems all the more necessary to bring out into full prominence their claims upon the admiration of posterity, because they have scarcely done justice to themselves in the writings they have left behind them. They were not, as they have been represented, a set of amiable and well-meaning but weak and illiterate fanatics. But their forte no doubt lay more in preaching and in practical work than in writing.

Again, the stream of theological thought has to a great extent drifted into a different current from that in which it ran in their day, and this change may have prevented many good men from sympathising with them as they deserved. The Evangelicals of the last century represented one side, but only one side, of our Church's teaching. With the spirituality and fervency of her liturgy and the 'Gospel' character of all her formularies, they were far more in harmony than the so-called 'orthodox' of their day. But they did not, to say the least of it, bring into prominence what are now called, and what would have been called in the seventeenth century, the 'Catholic' features of the English Church. They simply regarded her as one of many 'Protestant' communions. Distinctive Church principles, in the technical sense of the term, formed no part of their teaching. Daily services, frequent communions, the due observance of her Fasts and Festivals, all that is implied in the terms 'the æstheticism and symbolism of worship,' found no place in their course. The consequence was that while they formed a compact and influential body which still remained *within* the pale of the Church, they also revived very

largely, though unintentionally, the Dissenting interest, which was at least in as drooping a condition as the Church of England before the Evangelical school arose. But every English Churchman has reason to be deeply grateful to them for what they did, however much he may be of opinion that their work required supplementing by others no less earnest, but of a different tone of thought.

CHAPTER X.

CHURCH FABRICS AND SERVICES.

Thirty years or more of the present century had passed before the Church awoke to put its material house in order, to improve and beautify its churches, and to improve the character of its services. Church buildings and Church services, as they are remembered by men yet of middle age, were very much the same at the close of the Georgian period as they were at its beginning. Much, therefore, of the present chapter will exhibit a state of things in many respects perfectly familiar to men who are still in the prime of life. Our great-great-grandfathers would have felt quite at home in many of the churches which we remember in our childhood. They would find now a great deal that was strange to them. Though Prayer-book and Rubrics remain the same, Church spirit in our day does not own very much in common with that which most generally prevailed during the reigns of the four Georges.

In a Church like this of England, where so much liberty of thought and diversity of opinion has ever been freely conceded to bishops and clergy as well as to its lay members, there has never failed to be, to some extent at least, a corresponding variety in the outward surroundings of public worship. From the beginning of the Reformation to the present day, the three principal varieties of Church opinion known in modern phraseology as 'High,' 'Low,' and 'Broad' Church have never ceased to co-exist within its borders. One or other of the three parties has at times been very depressed, while another has been popular and predominant. But there has never been any external cause to prevent the revival of the one, or to make it impossible that the other should not, with changing circumstances, lose its temporary supremacy. In the eighteenth century there were, from beginning to end, men of each of these three sections. The old Puritanism was almost obsolete; but there were always Low

Churchmen, not only in the earlier, but in the modern sense of the word. High Churchmen, in the seventeenth-century and Laudean meaning, were no doubt few and far between by the time the century had run through half its course. But they were not wholly confined to the Nonjuring 'remnant,' and High Churchmen of a less pronounced type never ceased to abound. Broad Churchmen, of various shades of opinion, were always numerous. Only each and every party in the Church was weakened and diluted in force and purpose by a widespread deficiency in warmth of feeling and earnestness of conviction. Hot party feeling is no doubt a mischief; but exemption from it is dearly bought by the levelling influences of indifference, or of the lukewarmness which approaches to it. The Church of the eighteenth century, and of the Georgian period in general, was by no means deficient in estimable clergymen who lived and died amid the well-earned respect of parishioners and neighbours. But the tendencies of the time were in favour of a decent, unexacting orthodoxy, neither too High, nor too Broad, nor too Low, nor too strict. It may be well imagined that this feeling among the clergy should also find outward expression in the general character of the churches where they ministered, and of the services in which they officiated. A traveller interested in modes of worship might have passed through county after county, from one parish church to another, and would have found, as compared with the present time, a singular lack of variety. No doubt he would see carelessness and neglect contrasting in too many places with a more comely order in others. He would very rarely notice any disposition to develop ritual, to vary forms, and to make use of whatever elasticity the laws of the Church would permit, in order to make the externals of worship a more forcible expression of one or another school of thought.

Our forefathers in the eighteenth century were almost always content to maintain in tolerable, or scarcely tolerable repair, at the lowest modicum of expense, the existing fabrics of their churches. It has been truly remarked, that 'to this apathy we are much indebted; for, after all, they took care that the buildings should not fall to the ground; if they had done more, they would probably have done worse.'[1] For ecclesiastical architecture was then, as is well known, at its lowest ebb. 'Public taste,' wrote Warburton to Hurd in 1749, 'is the most wretched imaginable.'[2] He was speaking, at the time, of poetry.

[1] Review of Milner's *Church Arch.* in *Q. Rev.* vol. vi. 63.
[2] Warburton and Hurd's *Correspondence*, 3.

But poetry and art are closely connected ; and it is next to impossible that depth of feeling and grandeur of conception should be found in the one, at a date when there is a marked deficiency of them in the other. There were, however, special reasons for the decline of church architecture. It had become, for very want of exercise, an almost forgotten art. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the work of building churches had been prosecuted with lavish munificence ; so much so, that the Reformed Church succeeded to an inheritance more than doubly sufficient for its immediate wants.[1] A period, therefore, of great activity in this respect was followed by one of nearly total cessation. 'In England no church was erected of the smallest pretensions to architectural design between the Reformation and the great fire of London in 1666, with the solitary exception of the small church in Covent Garden, erected by Inigo Jones in 1631.'[2] 'During the eighty years that elapsed from the death of Henry VIII. to the accession of Charles I., the transition style left its marks in every corner of England in the mansions of the nobility and gentry, and in the colleges and schools which were created out of the confiscated funds of the monasteries ; but, unfortunately for the dignity of this style, not one church, nor one really important public building or regal palace, was erected during the period which might have tended to redeem it from the utilitarianism into which it was sinking. The great characteristic of this epoch was, that during its continuance architecture ceased to be a natural mode of expression, or the occupation of cultivated intellects, and passed into the state of being merely the stock in trade of certain professional experts. Whenever this is so, *Addio Maraviglia !*'[3] The reign of Puritanism was of course wholly unfavourable to the art ; the period of laxity that followed was no less so. Even Wren, of whose comprehensive genius Englishmen have every reason to speak with pride, formed, in the first instance, a most inadequate conception of what a Christian Church should be. 'The very theory of the ground plan for a church had died out, when he constructed his first miserable design for a huge meeting-house.'[4]

Before the eighteenth century, Gothic architecture had already fallen into utter disrepute. Sir Henry Wotton, fresh from his embassies in Venice, had declared that such was the 'natural imbecility' of pointed arches, and such 'their very uncomeliness,' that they ought to be 'banished from judicious eyes,

[1] James Fergusson's *History of the Modern Styles of Architecture*, 246. [2] Id. 246. [3] Id. 255.
[4] M. E. C. Walcot, *Traditions, &c., of Cathedrals*, 47.

among the reliques of a barbarous age.'[1] Evelyn, lamenting the demolition by Goths and Vandals of the stately monuments of Greek and Roman architecture, spoke of the mediæval buildings which had risen in their stead, as if they had no merits to redeem them from contempt—'congestions of heavy, dark, melancholy and monkish piles, without any proportion, use, or beauty,'[2] deplorable instances of pains and cost lavishly expended, and resulting only in distraction and confusion. Sir Christopher Wren said of the great cathedrals of the Middle Ages, that they were 'vast and gigantic buildings indeed, but not worthy the name of architecture.'[3] Even at such times there were some who were proof against the caprice of fashionable taste, and who were not insensible to the solemn grandeur of 'high embowed roofs,' 'massy pillars,' and 'storied windows.'[4] Lord Lyttelton censured the old architecture as 'loaded with a multiplicity of idle and useless parts,' yet granted that 'upon the whole it has a mighty awful air, and strikes you with reverence.'[5] Henry VII.'s Chapel at Westminster was still regarded with admiration as 'that wonder of the world;'[6] and although people did not quite know what to do with their cathedrals, and regarded them rather as curiosities, alien to the times, and heirlooms from a dead past, they did not cease to speak of them with some pride. But popular taste—so far as architectural taste can be spoken of as prevalent in any definite form throughout the greater part of the last century—was all in favour of a 'Palladian' or 'Greek' style. It was a style scarcely adapted to our climate, and unfavourable to the symbolism of Christian thought, yet capable, in the hands of a master, of being very grand and imposing. Under weaker treatment the effect was grievous. There was neither manliness nor solemnity in the usual run of churches built after the similitude of 'Roman theatres and Grecian fanes.'[7] Maypoles instead of columns, capitals of no order, and pie-crust decorations—such, exclaimed Seward,[8] were the too frequent adjuncts of the newly built churches he saw about him. At the time, however, that Seward wrote, a change had already begun to show itself in many influential quarters. Even the 'correct classicality' of Sir William Chambers,[9] the leading architect of the day, met, towards the close of the century, with by no

[1] Quoted in *Q. Rev.* vol. vi. 62.
[2] Id. vol. lxix. iii.
[3] *Parentalia*, p. 305. *Q. Rev.* vol. ii. 133.
[4] *Il Penseroso.* [5] *Persian Letters*, No. xxvi.
[6] Paterson's *Pietas Londinensis*, 1714, 236.
[7] Cawthorne's Poems.—Anderson's *English Poets*, x. 425.
[8] Seward's *Anecdotes*, 1798, ii. 312.
[9] J. Fergusson's *Mod. Archit.* 282.

means the same unquestioning admiration which he had received at an earlier date. There was division of opinion on fundamental questions of architectural fitness; and persons could applaud the talents of mediæval builders without being considered eccentric. Gray, Mason, Warton, Bishop Percy, and many others, had contributed in various ways to create in England a reaction, still more widely felt in Germany, in favour of ideas which for some time past had been contemptuously relegated to the darkness of the Middle Ages. A frequent, though as yet not very discriminating, approval of Gothic[1] architecture was part of the movement. 'High veneration,' remarked Dr. Sayers, writing about the last year of the century, 'has lately been revived for the pointed style.'[2] It was one among many other outward signs of a change gradually coming over the public mind on matters concerned with the observances of religion.

An enthusiastic antiquary and ecclesiologist, whose contributions to the 'Gentleman's Magazine' of 1799 were of great service in calling attention to the reckless mischief which was often worked, under the name of improvements, in our noblest churches and cathedrals, has transmitted to us a sad list of mutilations and disfigurements which had come under his observation. He has told how 'in every corner of the land some unseemly disguise, in the Roman or Grecian taste, was thrown over the most lovely forms of the ancient architecture.'[3] His indignation was especially moved by the havoc perpetrated in Westminster Abbey, sometimes by set design of tasteless innovators, often by 'some low-hovelled cutter of monumental memorials,' or by workmen at coronations, 'who, we are told, cannot attend to trifles.'[4] Carter's lamentation is more than justified by Dean Stanley, who has enumerated in detail many of the vandalisms committed during the last age in the minster under his care. What else could be expected, when it was held by those who were thought the best judges in such matters, that nothing could be more barbarous and devoid of interest than the Confessor's Chapel, and 'nothing more stupid than laying statues on their backs?' It might have been supposed that Dean Atterbury, at all events, would have had some sympathy with the workmanship of the past. But 'there is a charming tradition that he stood by, complacently watching the workmen as they hewed smooth

[1] Its advocates were very desirous, about this time, of substituting the term 'English' for 'Gothic.'—Sayers, ii. 440. *Q. Rev.* ii. 133, iv. 476.

[2] Sayers' 'Architect. Antiquities.'—*Life and Works*, ii. 476.

[3] *Gentleman's Mag.* 1799, 858.

[4] *Gentleman's Mag.* 1799, 667–70, 733–6, 858–61.

the fine old sculptures over Solomon's porch, which the nineteenth century vainly seeks to recall to their places.'[1] For a list of some of the disastrous alterations and demolitions inflicted upon other cathedrals, the reader may be referred to the pages of Mr. Mackenzie Walcot.[2] Wreck and ruin seems especially to have followed in the track of Wyatt, who was looked upon, nevertheless, as a principal reviver of the ancient style of architecture. If cathedrals, where it might be imagined that some remains of ecclesiastical taste would chiefly linger, thus suffered, even when under the supervision of the chief architects of the period, what would have happened if, at such a time, a sudden zeal for Church restoration had invaded the country clergy?

We may be thankful, on the whole, that it was an age of whitewash. Carter, writing of Westminster Abbey, records one thing with hearty gratitude. It had not been whitewashed. It was the one religious structure in the kingdom which showed its original finishing, and 'those modest hues which the native appearance of the stone so pleasantly bestows.'[3] Everywhere else the dauber's brush had been at work. He spoke of it with indignation. 'I make little scruple in declaring that this job work, which is carried on in every part of the kingdom, is a mean makeshift to give a delusive appearance of repair and cleanliness to the walls, when in general this wash is resorted to to hide neglected or perpetrated fractures.'[4] The stone fretwork of the Lady Chapel at Hereford,[5] the valuable wall-paintings at Salisbury,[6] the carved work of Grinling Gibbons at St. James', Westminster,[7] shared, for example, the general fate, and were smothered in lime. Horace Walpole, laughing at the City of London for employing one whom he thought a very indifferent craftsman to write their history, said he supposed that presently, instead of having books published with the imprimatur of an university, they would be 'printed as churches are whitewashed —John Smith and Thomas Johnson, Churchwardens.'[8] How few churches are there that were not earlier or later in the last century emblazoned with some such like scroll! But if whitewash conceals, it also preserves; it hides beauties to which one generation is blind, that it may disclose them the more fresh and uninjured to another which has learnt to appreciate them.

When it is said that the churches were kept in such tolerable

[1] A. P. Stanley's *Hist. Memorials of Westminster Abbey*, 540–2.
[2] M. E. C. Walcot, *Traditions & Customs of Cathedrals*, 47–55.
[3] *Gentleman's Mag.* 1799, 669.
[4] Id.
[5] Walcot, 52.
[6] Id. 51.
[7] *London Parishes*, &c., 146.
[8] H. Walpole's *Letters*, i. 360.

repair that at all events they did not fall, it would appear that in many cases little more than this could be truthfully added. Ely Minster remains standing, but more by good chance, if Defoe is to be trusted, than from any sufficient care on the part of its guardians. 'Some of it totters,' he wrote, 'so much with every gale of wind, looks so like decay, and seems so near it, that whenever it does fall, all that 'tis likely will be thought strange in it will be that it did not fall a hundred years sooner.'[1] Such an instance might well be exceptional, and no doubt was so among cathedrals;[2] but a great number of parish churches had fallen, by the middle of the century, into a deplorable state. Secker, in a charge delivered in 1750, gives a grievous picture of what was to be seen in many country churches. 'Some, I fear, have scarce been kept in necessary present repair, and others by no means duly cleared from annoyances, which must gradually bring them to decay: water undermining and rotting the foundations, earth heaped up against the outside, weeds and shrubs growing upon them . . . . too frequently the floors are meanly paved, or the walls dirty or patched, or the windows ill glazed, and it may be in part stopped up . . . . or they are damp, offensive, and unwholesome. Why (he adds) should not the church of God, as well as everything else, partake of the improvements of later times?'[3] Bishop Fleetwood had observed forty years before,[4] that unless the good public spirit of repairing churches should prevail a great deal more, a hundred years would bring to the ground a huge number of our churches. 'And no one, said Bishop Butler, will imagine that the good spirit he has recommended prevails more at present than it did then.'[5] As for cleanliness, Bishop Horne remarked that in England, as in the sister kingdom, it was evidently a frequent maxim that cleanliness was no essential to devotion. People seemed very commonly to be of the same opinion with the Scotch minister, whose wife made answer to a visitor's request—'The pew swept and lined! My husband would think it downright popery!'[6] One can understand, without needing to sympathise with it, the strong Protestantism of Hervey's admiration for a church 'mag-

[1] Defoe's *Tour through the whole Island*, i. 85.

[2] Many of them, however, could not yet have recovered from the treatment they had endured in the time of the Commonwealth. Though the Parliamentary committee appointed to decide the question had happily decided against the demolition of cathedrals, they were allowed to fall into a miserable state of dilapidation and decay.

[3] Secker's *Eight Charges*, 151–4.

[4] In his *Charge to the Clergy of St. Asaph*, 1710.

[5] Bishop Butler's *Primary Charge*, 1751.

[6] Horne's 'Thoughts on Various Subjects'—*Works*, i. 286.

nificently plain ;'[1] but in the eighteenth century, the excessive plainness, not to say the frequent dirtiness, of so many churches was certainly owing to other causes than that of ultra-Protestantism.

After speaking of the disrepair and squalor which, although far indeed from being universal, were too frequently noticeable in the churches of the last age, it might seem a natural transition to pass on to the singularly incongruous uses to which the naves of some of our principal ecclesiastical buildings were in a few instances perverted. In the minds of modern Churchmen there would be the closest connection between culpable neglect of the sacred fabric, and the profanation of it by admission within its walls of the sights and sounds of common daily business or pleasure. There was something of this in the period under review. The extraordinary desecrations once general in St. Paul's belong indeed chiefly to the latter half of the 16th and the first half of the 17th centuries. Most readers are more or less familiar with the accounts given of 'Paul's Walk' in the old days,—how it was not only 'the recognised resort of wits and gallants, and men of fashion and of lawyers,'[2] but also, as Evelyn called it, 'a stable of horses and a den of thieves'[3]—a common market, where Shakspeare makes Falstaff buy a horse as he would at Smithfield[4]—usurers in the south aisle, horse-dealers in the north, and in the midst 'all kinds of bargains, meetings, and brawlings.'[5] Before the eighteenth century began, 'Paul's Walk' was, in all its main features, a thing of the past. Yet a good deal more than the mere tradition of it remained. In a pamphlet published in 1703, 'Jest' asks 'Earnest' whether he has been at St. Paul's, and seen the flux of people there. 'And what should I do there,' says the latter, 'where men go out of curiosity and interest, and not for the sake of religion? Your shopkeepers assemble there as at full 'Change, and the buyers and sellers are far from being cast out of the Temple.'[6] At Durham there was a regular thoroughfare across the nave until 1750, and at Norwich until 1748, when Bishop Gooch stopped it. The naves of York and Durham Cathedral were fashionable promenades.[7] The Confessor's Chapel made, on occasion, a convenient playground for Westminster scholars, who were allowed,

[1] J. Hervey, 'Medit. among the Tombs'—*Works*, i. 1.

[2] W. Longman's *History of St. Paul's*, chap. 4. See especially the account quoted there from Earle's *Microcosmography*, 1628.

[3] Quoted in Id.

[4] *Hen. IV.* part ii. act i. sc. 2.

[5] Pilkington, quoted in Walcot's *Cathedrals*, 82.

[6] 'Heraclitus Ridens,' quoted in J. Malcolm's *Manners, &c. of London*, i. 233.

[7] Walcot, 81.

as late as 1829, to keep the scenes for their annual play in the triforium of the north transept.[1] Nevertheless 'Paul's Walk' and all customs in any way akin to it, so far as they survived into the last century, had in reality little or nothing to do with the irreligion and neglect of which the century has been sorely, and not causelessly accused. Rather, they were the relics of customs which had not very long fallen into desuetude. The time had been, and was not so very long past, when the stalls and bazaars of St. Paul's Cathedral did but illustrate on a large scale what might be seen on certain days in almost all the churches of the kingdom. Our forefathers in the Middle Ages drew a broad line of distinction between the chancel and the nave. The former was looked upon as sanctified exclusively to religious uses ; the latter was regarded rather as a consecrated house under the care and protection of the Church. It sounds somewhat like a paradox to assert that the exclusion from churches of all that is not distinctly connected with the service of religion was mainly due to the Puritans, of whose wanton irreverence in sacred buildings we hear so much. Yet this seems certainly to have been the case. Traces of the older usage lingered on, as we have seen, into the middle of the last century ; but from the time of the Commonwealth they had already become exceptional anachronisms.

Before the century commenced pews had become everywhere general. In mediæval times there had been, properly speaking, none. A few distinguished people were permitted, as a special privilege, to have their private closets furnished, very much like the grand pews of later days, with cushions, carpets, and curtains. But, as an almost universal rule, the nave was unencumbered with any permanent seats, and only provided with a few portable stools for the aged and infirm. Pews began to be popular in Henry VIII.'s time, notwithstanding the protests of Sir Thomas More and others. Under Elizabeth they became more frequent in town churches. In Charles I.'s time, they had so far gained ground as to be often a source of hot and even riotous contention between those who opposed them and others who insisted on erecting them. Even in Charles II.'s reign they were exceptional rather than otherwise, and the term had not yet become limited to boxes in church. Pepys writes in his 'Diary' on February 18, 1668, 'At Church ; there was my Lady Brouncker and Mrs. Williams in our pew.' On the 25th of the same month, we find the entry, 'At the play ; my wife sat in my Lady Fox's pew with her.'[2] Sir Christopher Wren was not at all pleased to see

[1] A. P. Stanley's *Hist. Memorials of Westminster*, 535.

[2] Pepys' *Diary*, vol. v. 113, 114.

them introduced into his London churches.[1] During the luxurious, self-indulgent times that followed the Restoration, private pews of all sorts and shapes gained a general footing. Before Queen Anne's reign was over they had become so regular a part of the ordinary furniture of a church, that in the regulations approved in 1712 by both Houses of Convocation for the consecrating of churches and chapels, it is specially enjoined that the churches be previously pewed.[2] Twelve years, however, later than this they were evidently by no means universal in country places. In 1725, Swift, enumerating 'the plagues of a Country Life,' makes 'a church without pews' a special item in his list.[3] But 'repewed,' had been for many years past a characteristic part of formula which recorded the church restorations of the period.[4] There are plenty of allusions in the writings of contemporary poets and essayists to the cosy, sleep-provoking structures in which people of fashion and well-to-do citizens could enjoy without attracting too much notice—

> the Sunday due
> Of slumbering in an upper pew.[5]

In Swift's humorous metamorphosis—

> A bedstead of the antique mode,
> Compact of timber many a load,
> Such as our ancestors did use,
> Was metamorphos'd into pews;
> Which still their ancient nature keep,
> By lodging folks dispos'd to sleep.[6]

Those of the more exclusive sort were often built up with tall partitions, like Lady Booby's, 'in her pew, which the congregation could not see into.'[7] Sometimes they were curtained, 'sometimes filled with sofas and tables, or even provided with fireplaces;'[8] and cases might be quoted where the tedium of a long service, or the appetite engendered by it, were relieved by the entry, between prayers and sermon, of a livery servant with sherry and light refreshments.[9] Even into cathedrals cumbrous

[1] Lord Braybrook's note to *Pepys*, v. 114.

[2] Burns' *Eccles. Law*, i. p. 328. High Churchmen, however, sometimes had their jest at the special love of the opposite party for 'their own Protestant Pews.'—T. Lewis's *Scourge*, Apr. 8, 1717, No. 10.

[3] Anderson's *British Poets*, ix. 82.

[4] Paterson's *Pietas Londinensis, passim.*

[5] Prior's *Poems*, 'Epitaph on Jack and Joan'—*British Poets*, vii. 448.

[6] 'Baucis and Philemon'—*B. Poets*, ix. 13.

[7] Fielding's *Jos. Andrews*, book iv. chap. i.

[8] A. J. B. Beresford Hope, *Worship in the Church of England*, 1874, 17.

[9] Such an instance was once mentioned to the writer by Bishop Eden, the late Primus of the Episcopal Church in Scotland.

ladies' pews were often introduced. Horace Walpole tells an extraordinary story of Gloucester Cathedral in 1753. A certain Mrs. Cotton, who had largely contributed to whitewashing and otherwise ornamenting the church, had taken it into her head that the soul of a favourite daughter had passed into a robin. The Dean and Chapter indulged her in the whim, and she was allowed to keep a kind of aviary in her private seat. 'Just by the high altar is a small pew hung with green damask, with curtains of the same, and a small corner cupboard painted, carved, and gilt, for birds in one corner.'[1] In Ripon Cathedral, some of the old tabernacle work of the stalls was converted into pews.[2] Everywhere the pew system remained uncontrolled, pampering self-indulgence, fostering jealousies, and too often thrusting back the poor into mean, comfortless sittings, in whatever part of the church was coldest, darkest, and most distant from sight and hearing. Towards the end of the century its evils began to be here and there acknowledged. The population was rapidly increasing in the larger towns; and the new proprietary chapels erected to meet this increase were often commercial speculations conducted on mere principles of trade, most unworthy of a National Church. No reflecting Churchman could fail to be disgusted with a traffic in pews which in many cases absolutely excluded the poor.[3] Among the new churches there were in fact only one or two honourable exceptions to the general rule. A free church was opened at Bath, another at Birmingham;[4] it appears that all the rest of these 'Chapels of Ease' unblushingly gave the lie, so far as in them lay, to the declaration of our Lord that the poor have the Gospel preached unto them. Some time had yet to elapse before improved feeling could do much towards abating the unchristian nuisance. But energetic protests were occasionally heard. 'I would reprobate,' wrote Mrs. Barbauld (1790) 'those little gloomy solitary cells, planned by the spirit of aristocracy, which deform the building no less to the eye of taste than to the eye of benevolence, and insulating each family within its separate enclosure, favour at once the pride of rank and the laziness of indulgence.'[5] 'It is earnestly to be wished,' remarked Dr. Sayers about the same time, 'that our churches were as free as those of the continent from these vile incumbrances.' Their injury to architectural effect was the

[1] Walpole's *Letters*, ii. 35, quoted by Walcot, 56.

[2] Walcot, 53.

[3] *Considerations on the present State of Religion*, 1801, p. 47.—Polwhele's Introduction to *Lavington*, § ccxx. &c.

[4] *Considerations*, &c. 53. *Q. Rev.* vol. x. 54.

[5] *A. L. Barbauld's Works*, by Lucy Aikin, ii. p. 459.

least of their evils. They were fruitful, he said, in jealousies, and utterly discordant to the worship of a God who is no respecter of persons.[1]

Of the galleries, so often enumerated in Paterson's account of London Churches (1714) among recently erected 'ornaments,' little need be said, except that they were often wholly unnecessary, or only made necessary by the great loss of space squandered in the promiscuous medley of square and ill-shaped pews. It was an object of some ambition to have a front seat in the gallery. 'The people of fashion exalt themselves in church over the heads of the people of no fashion.'[2] A crowded London church in the old times, gallery above gallery thronged with people, was no doubt an impressive spectacle, not soon to be forgotten. To many the thought of galleried churches will revive a different set of remembrances. Dusky corners, a close and heavy atmosphere, back seats for children and the scantily favoured, to which sound reached as a drowsy hum, and where sight was limited to the heads of people in their pews, to their hats upon the pillars, and perhaps an occasional half-view of the clergyman in the pulpit, seen at intervals through the interstices of the gallery supports—such are the recollections which will occur to some. Certainly they are calculated to animate even an excessive zeal for opening out churches, and creating wider space and freer air.

And who does not remember some of the other special adjuncts of an old-fashioned church, as it had been handed down little altered from the time of our great-grandfathers? There were the half-obliterated escutcheons, scarcely less dismal in aspect than the coffin plates with which the columns of the Welsh churches were so profusely decorated. No wonder Blair introduces into his poem on 'The Grave' a picture of—

> the gloomy aisles
> Black plastered, and hung round with shreds of 'scutcheons.[3]

And then, in the place of the ancient rood loft, was that masterpiece of rural art—

> Moses and Aaron upon a church wall,
> Holding up the Commandments, for fear they should fall.[4]

[1] 'Hints on English Architecture'—Dr. F. Sayers' *Life and Works*, ii. 203. So also Bishop Watson, in 1800, complained that not only were there many too few churches in London, but 'the inconvenience is much augmented by the pews which have been erected therein. He would have new churches built with no appropriated seats, simply benches'—*Anecdotes of Bishop Watson's Life*, ii. 111.

[2] Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*, chap. 13.

[3] Robert Blair's *The Grave*, lines 36–7.

[4] Quoted, with some humour, by Bishop Newton, in defending Sir Joshua Reynolds' proposals for paintings in St. Paul's.—*Works*, i. 142.

There was the glorified record of the past deeds of parish officials, well adapted to fire the emulation of a succeeding generation—

> With pride of heart, the Churchwarden surveys
> High o'er the belfry, girt with birds and flowers,
> His story wrought in capitals: 'twas I
> That bought the font; and I repaired the pews.[1]

There were the tables of benefactors conspicuous under the western gallery. The Lower House of Convocation in 1710 had issued special directions in recommendation of this practice. The bishops also—Fleetwood,[2] Secker,[3] and others—did not fail to enjoin it in their charges. And not without reason; for a great number of parish benefactions appear to have been lost by lapse or otherwise about the beginning of the eighteenth century. Yet smaller letters, and a less prominent position, might have served the same purpose, with less disfigurement, and less offence to the decent humility which best befits the deeds of Christian benevolence.

The great three-decked pulpit of the Georgian age is still familiar to our memories. To the next generation it will be at length a curiosity of the past. Nor must the mighty sounding-board be forgotten, impending with almost threatening bulk over the preacher's head, and adorned with the emblematic symbol of grace:—

> I cast my eyes upon him, and explored
> The dove-like form upon the sounding board.[4]

The pulpit had supplanted the old portable box-desk at the time of the Reformation, and had maintained itself in undiminished honour through all the subsequent changes. In rich London parishes much rare workmanship was often expended upon it. If not by its costliness, at all events by its dimensions, it was apt to throw all other church furniture into the shade. And 'in a few abnormal instances, particularly in watering-places, the rostra would even overhang the altar, or occupy a sort of gallery behind it.'[5] During the earlier part of the century, an hour-glass, in a wood or iron frame, was still the not unfrequent appendage to a pulpit.[6] In the Elizabethan period it had been general. But perhaps the Puritan preachers had not cared to be

[1] Christoph. Smart's *Poems*, 'The Hop Garden,' book ii.
[2] Fleetwood's 'Charge of 1710'—*Works*, 479.
[3] Secker's 'Charge of 1753'—*Eight Charges*, 191.
[4] John Byrom's *Poems*—Chalmer's *B. Poets*, xv. 214.
[5] Beresford Hope, *Worship in the Church of E.* 19.
[6] *Tatler*, No. 264.

reminded that preaching had its limits ; or a later generation, on the other hand, might dread the suggestion that the sermon might last the hour. At all events, as they wore out, they were not often replaced ; and Bishop Kennet,[1] writing in the third decade of the century, spoke of them as already beginning to be uncommon. They were chiefly to be seen in old-fashioned country churches, such as that where, in Gay's eclogue, the village swains followed fair Blouzelind to her burial, and listened while the good man warned them from his text, and descanted upon the uncertainty of life—

> And spoke the hour-glass in her praise quite out.[2]

The bible 'of larger volume,' as directed in Lord Cromwell's injunctions, and in the Canons of 1751,[3] venerable with age, might sometimes be seen still chained to its desk,[4] as in the old days. In Pope's time, church bibles were very commonly in black-letter type.[5]

Litany desks were a great rarity. One in Exeter Cathedral appears to have been disused about 1740.[6]

Everyone knows what a neglected aspect the font usually bore during the whole of the Georgian period ; how it was often thrust into some corner of the church, as if it were a kind of encumbrance that could not be absolutely done away with, and very frequently supplanted by some basin or pewter vessel placed inside it. In 1799 Carter recorded with indignation that in Westminster Abbey the font had been altogether removed, to make space for some new monument, and was lying topsy-turvy in a side room.[7] In this, however, as in other respects, the neglect that was too generally prevalent must of course not be spoken of as if it were by any means universal.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, and in the reign of Queen Anne, there was some little discussion, in which Bishop Beveridge and others took part,[8] as to the propriety of retaining or renovating chancel screens. In mediæval times, these 'cancelli,' from which the chancel took its name, had been universal ; and a few had been put up under the Stuart sove-

[1] *Parochial Antiquities* —Jeaffreson, ii. 16 (note).
[2] Gay's *Poems*, 'The Dirge'—Anderson's *B. Poets*, viii. 151.
[3] Burns' *Eccles. Law*, i. 370.
[4] A few still remain, as at Rycote, in Oxfordshire.
[5] 'Smoothing the dog's ears of the great bible . . . in the black letter in which our bibles are printed.'—'Memoirs of a Parish Clerk,' Pope's *Works*, vii. 225.
[6] Walcot, 115.
[7] *Gentleman's Mag.* vol. lxix. 667.
[8] Beresford Hope, *Worship*, &c., 68, 129.

reigns, notwithstanding the offence with which they were regarded by those who looked upon them as one of 'the hundred points of popery.'

We find Archbishop Secker expressing his regret, not without cause, that chancels were not, as a rule, kept in much better order than other parts of the building. Incumbents were by no means so careful as they should be, and lay impropriators, whether private or collegiate, were generally strangely neglectful. 'It is indispensably requisite,' he added, 'to preserve them not only standing and safe, but clean, neat, decent, agreeable; and it is highly fit to go further, and superadd, not a light and trivial finery, but such degrees of proper dignity and grandeur as we are able, consistently with other real obligations.'[1]

The condition and decoration of the Lord's Table differed widely, especially in the earlier years of the period, in accordance with varieties of opinion and feeling in clergymen and in their congregations. For the most part it was insignificantly and meanly furnished, and hemmed closely in by the Communion rails. At the beginning of the century, it would appear that in the London churches a great deal of care and cost had been lately expended on 'altar-pieces.' In one church after another, Paterson records the attraction of a 'fine'—a 'beautiful'—a 'stately'—a 'costly' altar-piece.[2] Many of these, however, would by no means approve themselves to a more cultivated taste than that which then prevailed. Instead of the Greek marbles and rich baldachino which Wren had intended for the east end of St. Paul's, the authorities substituted imitation marble, and fluted pilasters painted with ultramarine and veined with gold.[3] The Vicar of Leeds, writing to Ralph Thoresby in 1723, tells him that a pleasing surprise awaits his return, 'Our altar-piece is further adorned, since you went, with three flower-pots upon three pedestals upon the wainscot, gilt, and a hovering dove upon the middle one; three cherubs over the middle panel, the middle one gilt, a piece of open carved work beneath, going down towards the middle of the velvet.' If, however, the reader cannot altogether admire the picture thus summoned before his eyes, he will at all events agree with the words that follow: 'But the greatest ornament is a choir well filled with devout communicants.'[4] The painted 'crimson curtains' at the east end of Battersea Church, 'trimmed with amber, and held up by gold cord with heavy gold

[1] Secker's *Fourth Charge* (1750), 154, and *Fifth Charge* (1753), 180.
[2] *Pietas Londinensis, passim.*
[3] W. Longman's *Hist. of St. Paul's*, p. 145.
[4] Ralph Thoresby's *Correspondence*, ii. 384.

tassels,'[1] may serve as another representative example of the kind of 'altar-piece' which commended itself to eighteenth-century Churchmen.

Nothing, it might be imagined, could be more inoffensive than the use of the sacred monogram. But there were some at the beginning of the period, both Dissenters and Puritan Churchmen, who looked very suspiciously at it. They ranked it, together with bowing at the name of Jesus and turning eastward at the Creed, among Romish proclivities. 'What mean,' Ambrose Barnes had said towards the close of the previous century, 'these rich altar-cloths, with the Jesuits' cypher embossed upon them?'[2] So also that worthy man, Ralph Thoresby, had expressed himself 'troubled' to see at Durham, among other 'superstitions' 'richly embroidered I. H. S. upon the high altar.'[3]

In Charles the First's time the Ritualistic party in the Church of England used sometimes to place upon the altars of their churches crucifixes and an array of candlesticks.[4] After the Restoration the former were never replaced. The two candles, however, interpreted as symbolical of the divine and human nature of the Lord, were by no means unfrequent in the churches of the last century, especially during its earlier years. Mr. Beresford Hope speaks of an old picture in his possession, of Westminster Abbey, referred to the beginning of the eighteenth century, in which candles are represented burning upon the altar.[5] This, at all events, was most unusual. Bishop Hoadly, writing against the Ritualistic practices of some congregations, speaks of 'the over-altars and the never-lighted candles upon them.'[6] In Durham Cathedral, which by traditional custom retained throughout the century a higher Ritual in some respects than was to be found elsewhere, the 'tapers' of which Thoresby speaks[7] were probably more than two in number.

The credence, or side table, upon which the sacramental elements are placed previously to being offered, in accordance with the rubric, upon the Lord's Table, had been objected to by many Puritan Churchmen. Provision was rarely made for this in eighteenth-century churches. It is mentioned as somewhat exceptional on the part of Bishop Bull, that 'he always offered

[1] Alex. Gilchrist's *Life of Blake*, i. 41.

[2] Quoted, with a similar passage from *Story's Journal*, by Walcot, 104.

[3] Ralph Thoresby's *Diary*, i. 60.

[4] Report of Conference of 1641, upon 'Innovations in Discipline,' quoted in Hunt's *Religious Thought in England*, i. 196.

[5] Quoted in Beresford Hope, *Worship*, &c., p. 232.

[6] Quoted by Hunt, iii. 48, note.

[7] Thoresby's *Diary*, i. 60.

the elements upon the Holy Table himself before beginning the Communion service.'[1]

Puritan feeling had very unreasonably regarded the cross with almost as much jealousy as the crucifix. This idea had, in the last century, so far gained ground, that the Christian emblem was not often to be seen, at all events in the interior of churches, and that those who did use it in their churches or churchyards were likely to incur a suspicion of Popery. An anonymous assailant of Bishop Butler in 1767, fifteen years after the death of that prelate, made it a special charge against him that he had 'put up the Popish insignia of the cross in his chapel at Bristol.'[2]

Steele, speaking, in one of his papers in the 'Guardian,' of Raphael's picture of our Saviour appearing to His disciples after His resurrection, makes some remarks upon religion and sacred art. 'Such endeavours,' he says, 'as this of Raphael, and of all men not called to the altar, are collateral helps not to be despised by the ministers of the Gospel. . . . All the arts and sciences ought to be employed in one confederacy against the prevailing torrent of vice and impiety: and it will be no small step in the progress of religion, if it is as evident as it ought to be, that he wants the best sense a man can have, who is cold to the "Beauty of Holiness."'[3] Tillotson, and other favourite writers of Steele's generation, had dwelt forcibly, and with much charm of language, upon the moral beauty of a virtuous and holy life. But there had never been a time when the English Church in general, as distinguished from any party in it, had cared less to invest religious worship with outward circumstances of attractiveness and beauty. As to the particular point which gave occasion to Steele's remarks, whatever might be said for or against the propriety of painting in churches, there was in his time little disposition to open the question at all.[4] One of the very few instances where a painting of the kind is spoken of, was connected with a very discreditable scandal. At a time when party feeling ran very high, White Kennet, Bishop of Peterborough, the well-known

[1] R. Nelson's *Life of Bishop Bull*, 52.

[2] Quoted in a review of Surtees' 'Hist. Durham,' *Q. Rev.* 39, 404. The charge was so persistently repeated that Archbishop Secker thought it just to his friend's memory to publish a formal defence. He regretted, however, that the cross had been erected. It was a cross of white marble let into a black slab, and surrounded by cedar work, in the wall over the Communion Table.—T. Bartlett's *Memoirs of Bishop Butler*, 91, 155.

[3] *Guardian*, No. 21, April 4, 1713.

[4] There were, however, some who put up pictures about the altar, and defended their use as 'the books of the vulgar.'—*Life of Bishop Kennet*, in an. 1716, 125.

author of 'Parochial Antiquities,' had made himself exceedingly obnoxious to some of the more extreme members of the High Church section, by his answer to Sacheverell's sermon upon 'false brethren.'[1] Dr. Welton, Rector of Whitechapel, put up at this juncture in his church a painted altar-piece in representation of the Last Supper, with Bishop Kennet conspicuous in it as Judas Iscariot. 'To make it the more sure, he had the doctor's great black patch put under his wig upon the forehead.'[2] It need hardly be added that the Bishop of London ordered the picture to be taken down.[3]

Sir Christopher Wren had intended to adorn the dome of St. Paul's with figures from sacred history, worked in mosaic by Italian artists. He was overruled. It was thought unusual, and likely also to be tedious and expensive.[4] But there were some who cherished a hope that some such embellishment was postponed only, not abandoned. Walter Harte, for example, the Nonjuror, in his poem upon painting, trusted that 'the cold north' would not always remain insensible to the claims of religious art. The time would yet come when we should see in our churches,

> Above, around, the pictured saints appear,

and when especially the metropolitan cathedral would be radiant with the pictorial glory which befitted it.

> Thy dome, O Paul, which heavenly views adorn,
> Shall guide the hands of painters yet unborn;
> Each melting stroke shall foreign eyes engage,
> And shine unrivalled through a future age.[5]

The question was brought forward in a practical shape in 1773. Two years earlier the State apartments at old Somerset Palace had been granted by the King to the Royal Academy. The chapel was included in the gift; and it was soon after suggested, at a general meeting of the society, 'that the place would afford a good opportunity of convincing the public of the advantages that would arise from ornamenting churches and cathedrals with works

[1] Lathbury's *History of the Nonjurors*, 256.

[2] *Diary of Mary Countess Cowper* (1714–20), pub. 1864, 92; and *Life of Bishop White Kennet*, 1730, 141–2.

[3] A very different anecdote may be told of an altar-piece in St. John's College, Cambridge. 'At Chapel,' wrote Henry Martyn, in 1800, 'my soul ascended to God: and the sight of the picture at the altar, of St. John preaching in the wilderness, animated me exceedingly to devotedness to the life of a missionary.'—*Journal*, &c., ed. by S. Wilberforce, quoted in Bartlett's *Memoirs of Bishop Butler*, 92.

[4] Longman's *Hist. of St. Paul's*, 141.

[5] 'Essay upon Painting.'—Anderson's *B. Poets*, ix. 824.

of art.'[1] This proposal was highly approved of by the society, and many of its members at once volunteered their services. Their president, however, Sir Joshua Reynolds, proposed a bolder scheme. He thought they should 'undertake St. Paul's Cathedral.' The amendment was carried unanimously. Application was accordingly made to the Dean and Chapter, who were pleased with the offer. Dean Newton, Bishop of Bristol, a great lover of pictures, was particularly favourable to the scheme, and warmly advocated it.[2] Sir Joshua promised 'The Nativity'; West offered his picture of 'Moses with the Laws'; Barry, Dance, Cipriani, and Angelica Kauffman engaged to present other paintings; and four other artists were afterwards added to the number. But the trustees of the building—Cornwallis, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Terrick of London—disapproved. Terrick was especially hostile to the idea, and when the Dean waited upon him and told him, with some exultation, of the progress that had been made, put an absolute veto upon the whole project. 'My good Lord Bishop of Bristol,' he said, 'I have been already distantly and imperfectly informed of such an affair having been in contemplation; but as the sole power at last remains with myself, I therefore inform your lordship that, whilst I live and have the power, I will never suffer the doors of the metropolitan church to be opened for the introduction of Popery into it.'[3]

Bishop Newton says, in his 'Memoirs,' that though there were some objectors, opinion was generally in favour of the offer made by the Academy, and that some churches and chapels adopted the idea. But St. Paul's probably suffered no loss through the further postponement of the decorations designed for it. In the first place, paintings—for these, rather than frescoes, appear to have been intended—were not the most appropriate kind of art for such an interior. Besides this, those 'earthly charms and graces,' which made Reynolds' style such an abomination to the delicate spiritual perceptions of the artist-poet Blake,[4] were by no means calculated to create any elevated ideal among his countrymen of what Christian art should be. And if the President of the Academy, the most renowned English painter of his age, was scarcely competent to such a work, what must be said of his proposed coadjutors? 'I confess,' said Dean Milman, 'I shudder at the idea of our walls covered with the audacious designs and tawdry colouring of West, Barry, Cipriani, Dance, and Angelica Kauffinan.'[5] Such criticism would be very exaggerated if it were

[1] *Memoirs of Sir J. Reynolds*, by H. W. Beechy, 224.
[2] Bishop Newton's *Life and Works*, 1787, i. 142–4.
[3] *Memoir*, &c., i. 225. [4] Alex. Gilchrist's *Life of W. Blake*, i. 96.
[5] Milman's *Annals of St. Paul*, quoted by Longman, *Hist. of St. P.* 153.

understood as a general condemnation of painters, whose merits in their own province of art were great. But it will universally be allowed that not to them, and scarcely to any other painters of the eighteenth century, could we look for the grandeur of thought or the elevated sentiment which an undertaking of the kind proposed so specially demanded.

Puritanism had been very destructive of the glass paintings which had added so much glory of colour to mediæval churches. The art had begun to decline, from a variety of causes, at the beginning of the Reformation. In Elizabeth's reign, few coloured windows of any note were executed. Under James I. and Charles I. the taste to some degree revived. A new style of colouring was introduced by Van Linge,[1] a skilful Flemish artist, who appears to have settled in England about 1610, and found many liberal patrons. It was an interval when much activity was displayed thoughout the kingdom in the work of repairing and beautifying churches. When he died, or left the country, the art became all but dormant. The Restoration did little to resuscitate it. Religious taste and feeling were at a low ebb. Not only in England, but throughout the Continent also, the glass painters had no encouragement, and were continually obliged to maintain themselves by practising the ordinary profession of a glazier. And besides, long after the time when painted windows had become secure from Puritanic violence, a feeling lingered on that there was something un-Protestant in them—something inconsistent, it might be, with the pure light of truth. For many years more, few were put up; nor these, for the most part, without much difference of opinion, and sometimes a great deal of angry controversy.[2] It may have stirred the irony of men who had no sympathy with these suspicions, that corporations and private persons who would by no means[3] admit into their churches windows in which scenes from our Saviour's life were pictured in hues that vied with those of the ruby and the sapphire had often no scruples in emblazoning upon them, to their own glorification, the arms of their family or their guild.[4] Winslow speaking of the east window[5] in University College, Oxford, done by Giles of York in 1687, the earliest example of a stained-glass window after the Restoration, remarks how much the art had deteriorated even in

[1] Jas. Dallaway on *Architecture*, &c., 443–5.

[2] Beresford Hope, *Worship*, &c. 19.

[3] 'When they startle at a dumb picture in a window.'—T. Lewis, in *The Scourge*, Apr. 9, 1717, No. 9.

[4] Various illustrations of this may be found in Paterson's *Pietas Londinensis*.

[5] A new one was substituted for it in 1864.

its most mechanical departments.[1] In the first quarter, however, of the eighteenth century, there was some improvement in it. Joshua Price, in the east window of St. Andrew's, Holborn, has 'rivalled the rich colouring of the Van Linges. The painting is deficient in brilliancy, and some of the shadows are nearly opaque; yet these defects may almost be overlooked in the excellence of its composition, and in its immense superiority over all other works executed between the commencement of the eighteenth century and the revival of the mosaic system.'[2] Joshua Price also executed some of the side windows in Magdalene College, and restored, in 1715, those in Queen's College, Oxford, the work of Van Linge, which had been broken by the Puritans.[3] William Price painted, in 1702, the scenes from the life of Christ, depicted on the lower lights of Merton College Chapel. They are 'weak as regards colour, enamel being used almost to the substitution of coloured glass,'[4] and lose in beauty and effect by the glaring yellow in which they are framed. He also painted the windows which were put up in Westminster Abbey by order of Parliament in 1722,[5] and repaired with considerable skill the Flemish windows of Rubens's time, which he purchased and put up on the south side of New College Chapel.[6] It is remarkable that the Prices appear to have been the last who possessed the old secret of manufacturing the pure ruby glass.[7] After their time, until its rediscovery some forty years ago in France, it was a familiar instance of a 'lost art.'

When nearly fifty years had passed, some little attention began to be once more turned, chiefly in colleges and cathedrals, to the adornment of churches with coloured windows. The most memorable examples are in New College Chapel. Pickett, of York, painted between 1765 and 1777 the lower lights of the northern windows in the choir, with much brilliancy of colour, but in a style very inferior to the work of the Flemings and William Price on the other side.[8] The great window in the antechapel, erected a few year later, certainly avoided that uniformity of gaudiness[9] which Warton so greatly complained of in Pickett's work. Its design employed for several years[10] the genius of Sir Joshua Reynolds. The central picture of the Nativity, after

[1] C. Winslow, *Hints on Glass Colouring*, i. 206. [2] Id. 207.
[3] J. Dallaway, *Architecture*, &c., 446.
[4] Winslow, *Hints*, &c., 207. [5] Dallaway, 446.
[6] C. Winslow, *Memoirs Illustrative of the Art of Glass Painting*, 153.
[7] C. Winslow, *Hints*, i. 216.
[8] C. Winslow, *Memoirs*, &c., 153.
[9] 'Shapes that with one broad glare the gazer strike,
Kings, bishops, nuns, apostles, all alike.'—*T. Warton.*
[10] Beechy's *Memoirs of Sir Josh. Reynolds*, 239.

Correggio's 'Notte' at Modena, was exceedingly fine as a sketch in colours. Unfortunately, it was wholly unsuited to glass, and remains a standing proof that oil and glass paintings cannot be rivals, their principles being essentially different. A competent critic pronounces that, had it been executed in coloured glass, it would still have been unsatisfactory.[1] As it is, the dull stains and enamels employed by Jarvis give it what Horace Walpole called 'a washed-out' effect. Reynolds has introduced into it likenesses both of himself and Jarvis, as shepherds worshipping. Of the allegorical figures beneath, Hartley Coleridge justly remarks that personifications which are nowhere found in Scripture are not well adapted for a church window.[2]

Another glass painting of something the same character, and showing the same futile attempt at impossible effects of light and shade,[3] was a picture of the Resurrection, executed by Edgington, from a design by Sir Joshua Reynolds, for the Lady Chapel of Salisbury Cathedral. Mention should also be made of the great eastern window in St. George's Chapel, Windsor, by Jarvis and Forrest, and designed by West. The three last examples quoted by Dallaway are Pearson's windows in Brasenose Chapel, his scenes from St. Paul's life, at St. Paul's, Birmingham, and his 'Christ bearing the Cross,' at Wanstead, Essex.[4] All these were produced towards the close of the century. They have merit, but they show also how much had to be learnt before the slowly reviving art of glass painting could recover anything of its ancient splendour.

Many ancient church bells disappeared in the general wreck of monastic property at the commencement of the Reformation. Many more were broken up and sold during the Civil Wars. In the eighteenth century another danger awaited them. They were not converted into money for spendthrift courtiers, nor disposed of for State necessities, nor cast into cannons and other implements of war; but they came to be considered a useful fund which the guardians of churches could fall back upon. 'Very numerous were the instances in which four bells out of five have been sold by the parish to defray churchwardens' accounts.'[5] On the other hand, a great number of new bells were cast during the period, among which may be mentioned the great bell of St. Paul's, 1716, and those of the University Church,

[1] C. Winslow, *Hints*, &c., i. 211.
[2] Hartley Coleridge, *Marginalia*, 253.
[3] C. Winslow, *Memoirs*, &c., 176.
[4] Dallaway's *Architecture*, &c., 454.
[5] *Q. Rev.* vol. xcv. 317, 'Review of Gatty and Ellacombe on Bells.' The two next sentences are based on the same authority.

Cambridge, a peal particularly admired by Handel. The single family of Rudall of Gloucester, cast during the ninety years ending with 1774 no less than 3,594 church bells. Bell-ringing is often spoken of as an exercise and recreation of educated men. Hearne, the famous Oxford antiquary, was passionately fond of it. In his diary there are constant allusions to the feats of bell-ringing which took place in Oxford, and to the intricacies and technicalities of the art.[1] The learned Samuel Parr is said to have been excessively fond of church bells,[2] and so was Robert Southey the poet.

The old superstitions connected with the inauguration of bells, and the services expected from them, had become exchanged in either case for a great deal of coarse rusticity and vulgarity. Some pious aspiration was still in many cases graved upon the border of the metal; but often, instead of the old 'funera plango, fulgura frango,' &c., or the dedication to Virgin or saint, the churchwarden who ordered the bell would order also an inscription, composed by himself, commemorative of his work and office. The doggerel was sometimes absurd enough:—

Samuel Knight made this ring
In Binstead Steeple for to ding;

or,

Thomas Eyer and John Winslade did contrive
To cast from four bells this peal of five;

or,

At proper times my voice I'll raise,
And sound to my subscribers' praise.[3]

And when the new bell was placed in the steeple, instead of the priestly unctions and quaint ceremonies of a past age, there was too often a heathenish scene of drunkenness and revelry. A common custom, alluded to by White of Selborne, was to fix it bottom upwards, and fill it with strong liquor. At Checkendon, in Oxfordshire, this was attended with fatal results. There is a tradition that one of the ringers helped himself so freely from the extemporised ale cask that he died on the spot, and was buried underneath the tower. Bells were still sometimes rung to dissipate thunderstorms, and perhaps to drive away contagion, under the notion that their vibrations purified the air. They were often rung on other occasions when they would have been

[1] Hearne's *Reliquiæ*, May 22, 1733, Jan. 2, 1734, May 2, 1734, &c.
[2] *Q. Rev.* vol. xxxix. 308.
[3] *Q. Rev.* vol. xcv. 328.

much better silent. At Bath no stranger of the smallest pretension to fashion could arrive without being welcomed by a peal of the Abbey bells.[1]

The curfew has not even yet fallen entirely into disuse. In the last century it was oftener heard to 'toll the knell of parting day.' At Ripon its place was supplied by a horn sounded every evening at nine.[2]

'If,' said Robert Nelson, 'his senses hold out so long, he can hear even his passing bell without disturbance.' Towards the beginning of the century, this old custom seems to have been tolerably general. Its original object had been to invite prayers in behalf of a departing soul, and to summon the priest, if he had had no other admonition, to his last duty of extreme unction. It was retained by the sixty-seventh canon as a solemn reminder of mortality. But towards the end of the century it was fast becoming obsolete. Pennant, writing in 1796, says that though the practice was still punctually kept up in some places, it had fallen into general desuetude in the towns.[3]

Churches neglected and in disrepair were not likely to be surrounded by well-kept churchyards. During the Georgian period it was common enough to see churchyards which might have served as pictures of dreariness and gloom. Webb's collection of epitaphs, published in 1775, is prefaced by some introductory verses which intimate, without any idea of censure, a condition of things which was clearly not very exceptional in the churchyards of towns and populous villages :—

> Here nauseous weeds each pile surround,
> And things obscene bestrew the ground ;
> Skulls, bones, in mouldering fragments lie,
> All dreadful emblems of mortality.[4]

Secker hopes the clergy of his diocese will keep their churchyards 'neat and decent, taking the profits of the herbage in such manner as may rather add beauty to the place.' But he implies that there were many incumbents who turned their cattle into the sacred precincts, 'to defile them, and trample down the gravestones ; and make consecrated ground such as you would not suffer courts before your own doors to be.'[5] And there were some who were not satisfied with turning in their cow and horse.[6]

[1] Oliver Goldsmith's 'Life of K. Nash, *Works*, iii. 374.
[2] Brand's *Popular Antiquities*, ii. 224.
[3] T. Pennant's *Holywell*, &c., 99.
[4] T. Webb's *Collect. of Epitaphs*, 1775, i. pref.
[5] Secker's *Eight Charges*, 182. Charge of 1753.
[6] 'Lest her new grave the parson's cattle raze,
For both his cow and horse the churchyard graze.'
Gay's *Shepherd's Week.*

Practices lingered within the recollections of living men which would nowadays cause a parochial rebellion. While, for example, the transition from licence to order was in progress, a certain rector had sown an unoccupied strip of the burial-ground with turnips. The archdeacon at his visitation admonished this gentleman not to let him see turnips when he came there next year. The rebuked incumbent could so little comprehend these decorous scruples that he supposed Mr. Archdeacon to be inspired by a zeal for agriculture, and the due rotation of crops. 'Certainly not, sir,' said he, ''twill be *barley* next year.'[1]

For the most part, however, there was nothing to give gross offence to the eye. Gray, in his charming elegy, used words exactly expressive of the ordinary truth, when he called it 'this neglected spot.' It was tranquil enough, and suggestive of pensive meditation, shaded perhaps by rugged elms or melancholy yews; but the grass was probably rank and untended, and the ground a confused medley of shapeless heaps. Except in epitaphs, there were no particular signs of tenderness and care; no flowers, no shrubs, no crosses. The revival of care for our beauty and comeliness of churches, and the example of well-kept cemeteries, have combined, since the time of the last of the Georges, to effect an improvement in the general aspect of our churchyards, which was certainly very much needed. Culpable neglect, it may be added, was sometimes shown in the admission of jesting or profane epitaphs. The inscription on Gay's monument in Westminster Abbey is a well-known example. One other instance, in illustration, will be abundantly sufficient. Imagine the carelessness of supervision which could allow the following buffoonery to be set up (1764) in the cathedral churchyard of Winchester:—

> Here rests in peace a Hampshire grenadier
> Who kill'd himself by drinking poor small beer;
> Soldier, be warned by his untimely fall,
> And when you're hot, drink strong, or none at all.[2]

In Wales, and in a few places in the south and west of England, the custom still lingered of planting graves with flowers and sweet herbs:—

> Two whitened flintstones mark the feet and head;
> While there between full many a simple flower,
> Pansy and pink, with languid beauty smile;
> The primrose opening at the twilight hour,
> And velvet tufts of fragrant camomile.[3]

[1] *Q. Rer.* vol. xc. 294. [2] T. Webb's *Collection of Epitaphs*, 1775, ii. 28.
[3] Elegy written in a churchyard in S. Wales, 1787, W. Mason's *Works*, 1811, i. 113.

Pepys makes mention of a churchyard near Southampton where the graves were accustomed to be all sown with sage.[1]

Before leaving the subject of church fabrics and their immediate surroundings, some little mention should be made of the effort made at the beginning of the century to supply the deficiency of churches in London. 'After some pause,' writes Addison, in one of his Roger de Coverley papers, 'the old knight, turning about his head twice or thrice to take a survey of the great metropolis, bid me observe how thick the City was set with churches, and that there was scarce a single steeple on this side Temple Bar. "A most heathenish sight!" said Sir Roger. "There is no religion at this end of the town. The fifty new churches will very much mend the prospect, but church work is slow, very slow."'[2] That growth of London, which was to bring within its vast embrace village after village and hamlet after hamlet, was already fast progressing, and in the early part of the century had greatly outstripped all church provision. Dean Swift, it is said, has the credit of having first aroused public attention to this want. In a paragraph of his 'Project for the Advancement of Religion,' he had said 'that five parts out of six of the people are absolutely hindered from hearing divine service, particularly here in London, where a single minister with one or two curates has the care sometimes of about 20,000 souls incumbent on him.'[3] A resolution was carried in the House of Commons (May 1711), that fifty new churches were necessary within the bills of mortality, and 350,000*l.* were granted for the purpose, 'which was a very popular thing.'[4] Of the proposed fifty, twelve were built; the money for which was raised by a duty on coal—2*s.* per chaldron from 1716 to 1720, and 3*s.* from 1720 to 1724.[5] After this exertion the work of church-building seems to have pretty nearly ended for the century. Towards the middle of it, the bishops complained in their Charges that there was no spirit for building churches, and that the occasional briefs issued for the purpose brought in very little.[6] Fifty years later the question had again become too serious to be overlooked, and with the revival of deeper religion in the Church, there was little likelihood of its being allowed to rest. In large towns, the disproportion between the population and the number and size of churches had become so great 'that not a tenth of the inhabi-

[1] Quoted in Brand's *Popular Antiquities*, ii. 299.
[2] *Spectator*, No. 383, May 20, 1712.
[3] 'Project, &c.' 1709—Swift's *Works*, viii. 105, with Sir W. Scott's note.
[4] Calamy's *Own Life*, ii. 239.
[5] *Annals of England*, iii. 202.
[6] Secker's *Fifth Charge*, 1753. Butler's *Durham Charge*, 1751.

tants could be received into them were they so disposed.'[1] A return made in 1811 showed that in a thousand large parishes in different parts of the kingdom there was church accommodation for only a seventh part of their aggregate population.[2] Parliament granted a million for the erection of new churches, and large subscriptions were raised by the societies. But Polwhele, writing in 1819, said there were two large London parishes, with a joint population of above 120,000, which kept their village churches with room for not more than 200; and that in 1812, Dr. Middleton tried in vain to build a new church for St. Pancras, where the population was 100,000, and the church would only accommodate 300.[3] These facts seem almost incredible; probably the writer from whom they are quoted overlooked subsidiary chapels attached to the parish church. It is, however, very clear that in London and many of the large towns no energetic efforts had for a long time been made to meet necessities of very crying urgency.

Bishop Beveridge, writing in the first years of the last century, lamented that 'daily prayers are shamefully neglected all the kingdom over; there being very few places where they have public prayers upon the week days, except perhaps on Wednesdays and Fridays.'[4] But in towns this order of the Church was far more carefully observed in Queen Anne's reign, and for some little time afterwards, than it has been since, at all events until a very recent date. Archbishop Sancroft, in his circular letter of 1688 to the bishops of his province, had specially urged the public performance of the daily office 'in all market and other great towns,' and as far as possible in less populous places also.[5] In London there was little to complain of. Although Puritan opinion had been unfavourable to daily services—Baxter having gone so far as to say, that 'it must needs be a sinful impediment against other duties to say common prayer twice a day'[6]—the old feeling as to the propriety of daily worship was by no means so thoroughly impaired as it soon came to be. Conscientious Church people in towns would generally have acknowledged that it was a duty, wherever there was no real impediment. Paterson's account of the London churches shows that, in 1714, a large proportion of them were open morning and evening for

[1] *Considerations on the Present State of Religion*, 1801, chap. v.
[2] *Q. Rer.* vol. x. 57.
[3] R. Polwhele's Introduction to *Lavington*, cclxxxi.
[4] Beveridge's *Necessity and Advantages of Public Prayer*, 34.
[5] Lathbury's *Hist. of the Nonjurors*, 77.
[6] Baxter's *English Nonconformity*, chap. 41. Quoted in Bingham's 'Origines Ecclesiasticæ'—*Works*, ix. 128.

common prayer. He notes, however, with an expression of great regret, that the number of worshippers was visibly falling off, and that in some cases evening service was being wholly discontinued in consequence of the paucity of attendance.[1] In the popular writings of Queen Anne's time constant allusion may be found to the early six-o'clock matins. It must be acknowledged, however, that the daily services were sometimes attended for other purposes than those of devotion. Steele, in a paper in the 'Guardian,'[2] in which he highly commends the practice of daily morning prayers, says that 'going to six-o'clock service, upon admonition of the morning bell, he found when he got there many poor souls who had really come to pray. But presently, after the confession, in came pretty young ladies in mobs, popping in here and there about the church, clattering the pew doors behind them, and squatting into whispers behind their fans.' Before long 'there was a great deal of good company come in.' A few did, indeed, seem to take pleasure in the worship ; but many seemed to make it a task rather than a voluntary act, and some employed themselves only in gossip or flirtation. He remarks, towards the close of the paper, that later hours were becoming more in vogue than the early service.

The duty of daily public worship was, as might be expected, chiefly insisted upon by the High Churchmen of the period. Thus we find Robert Nelson urging it. There were very few men of business, he said, who might not 'certainly so contrive their affairs as frequently to dedicate half an hour in four-and-twenty to the public service of God.'[3] Dodwell's biographer speaks of the great attention he paid to the daily prayers of the Church.[4] Bull introduced at Brecknock daily prayers, instead of their only being on Wednesdays and Fridays ; and at Carmarthen morning and evening daily prayers, whereas there had been only morning prayers before. In 1712 these were kept up and well frequented.[5] Archbishop Sharp admonished his town clergy to maintain them regularly.[6] Whiston, while he was yet incumbent of Lowestoft, used at daily matins and vespers an abridgment of the prayers approved by Bishop Lloyd.[7] The custom was, however, by no means confined to High Churchmen. Thoresby, while he was yet more than half a Dissenter, feeling, for instance, much

[1] Paterson's *Pictas Londinensis*, 305.
[2] *Guardian*, No. 65, May 26, 1713.
[3] R. Nelson, *Practice of True Devotion*, chap. i. § 3.
[4] Brokesby's *Life of Dodwell*, 1715, 542.
[5] Nelson's *Life of Bishop Bull*, 375–6.
[6] *Archbishop Sharp's Life*, by his Son, i. 201.
[7] Whiston's *Memoirs*, 1749, 124.

scruple as to the use of the cross in baptism, remarks in his 'Diary,' 'I shall never, I hope, so long as I am able to walk, forbear a constant attendance upon the public common prayer twice every day, in which course I have found much comfort and advantage.'[1] Some time before the century had run through half its course, daily services were fast becoming exceptional, even in the towns. The later hours broke the whole tradition, and made it more inconvenient for busy people to attend them. Year after year they were more thinly frequented, and one church after another, in quick succession, discontinued holding them. It was one sign among many others of an increasing apathy in religious matters. At places like Bath or Tunbridge Wells the churches were still open, and tolerably full morning and evening.[2] Elsewhere, if here and there a daily service was kept up, the congregation was sure to consist only of a few women; and the Bridget or Cecilia who was regularly there, was sure of being accounted by not a few of her neighbours, 'prude, devotee, or Methodist.'[3] At the end of the century, and on till the end of the Georgian period, daily public prayers became rarer still. In the country they were kept up only 'in a few old-fashioned town churches.'[4] How much they had dwindled away in London becomes evident from a comparison between the list of services enumerated in the 'Pietas Londinensis,' published in 1714, and a book entitled 'London Parishes: an Account of the Churches, Vicars, Vestries,' &c., published in 1824.

Throughout the earliest part of the period, the Wednesday and Friday services, particularly enjoined by the canon, were held in the London parish churches almost without exception, and very generally in country parishes.[5] But as the idea of daily public worship became in the popular mind more and more obsolete, these also were gradually neglected and laid aside. In the middle of the century we find many more allusions to them than at its close. Secker, in his Charge of 1761, said there should always be prayers on these days.[6] John Wesley wrote, in 1744, to advocate the careful observance of the Wednesday and Friday 'Stations or Half-fasts;'[7] the poet Young held them

[1] Thoresby's *Diary*, Aug, 8, 1702, i. 375.

[2] Goldsmith's 'Life of Nash'—*Works*, iii. 277–8. De Foe's *Tour through Great Britain*, 1738, i. 193, ii. 242.

[3] Lloyd's *Poems*, 'A Tale,' c. 1757, Cowper's *Poems*, 'Truth.'

[4] B. Hope, *Worship, &c., in the Ch. of E.*, 20.

[5] *Pietas Londinensis*, *passim*.

[6] Secker's *Eight Charges*, 77.

[7] Whiston mentions this with approval in his *Memoirs*, 1769, x. 138. It is mentioned of Archbishop Sharp that he always kept Wednesday and Friday as days of humiliation, and Friday as a fast.—*Life*, ii. 81. Hearne

in his church at Welwyn ;[1] they formed part of the duty at a church to which Gilbert Wakefield, in 1778, was invited to be curate.[2] James Hervey, at a time when his health was fast failing, said that he still managed to preach on Wednesday evenings, except in haytime and harvest,[3] &c. In 1824 there were Wednesday and Friday services in only a small minority of the London churches.[4]

Very similar remarks may be made in regard of the observance of Saints' days. In Queen Anne's time they were still generally kept as holy days, and business was even in some measure suspended.[5] There were services on these festivals in all the London churches.[6] We find, it is true, a High Church writer of this date, regretting that of late years the observance of these days had not been so strict as heretofore. He attributed this backwardness mainly to superstitious scruples derived from Puritan times, and to the immoderate pursuit of business.[7] The wonder rather was, that having been, for a considerable portion of the previous century, 'neglected almost everywhere throughout the kingdom,'[8] Church festivals should have recovered as much respect as they did. The extensive circulation of Robert Nelson's 'Festivals,' and the number of editions through which it passed, is in itself a sufficient proof that a great number of English Churchmen cordially approved a devout observance of the appointed holy days. But by the middle of the century the neglect of them was becoming general.

Burnet wished that Lent were not observed with 'so visible a slightness.'[9] It was observed, certainly, and very generally, but also very superficially. In London there were a considerable number of special sermons on Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent, the place and preachers being notified beforehand in a printed list issued by the Bishop.[10] Colston's Bristol benefaction, of 1708, provided, amongst his other charities, for an annual series of

and Grabe were very much scandalised at Dr. Hough making Friday his day for entertaining strangers. —Hearne's *Reliquiæ*, ii. 30. The boys at Appleby School, about 1730, always, as is incidentally mentioned, went to morning prayers in the Church on Wednesdays and Fridays ('Memoir of R. Yates,' appended to G. W Meadley's *Memoirs of Paley*, 123).

[1] R. A. Willmott, *Lives of Sacred Poets*, 1838, ii. x. 173.

[2] Gilbert Wakefield's *Memoirs*, 1792, x. 137.

[3] James Hervey's *Works*, 1805. *Letter* cxiv. Oct. 28, 1753—*Works*,' vol. vi.

[4] *London Parishes*, &c.

[5] A. Andrews' *The Eighteenth Century*, 63.

[6] Paterson's *Pietas Londinensis*.

[7] Johnson's *Clergyman's Vade-Mecum*, 1709, i. 179.

[8] *Life of Kettlewell*, 1719, 24.

[9] Burnet's *Four Discourses to the Clergy of Sarum*, 1694, 338.

[10] Paterson's *Pietas Londinensis*, Introd.

fourteen Lent sermons. The Low Churchmen of William's and Queen Anne's time instilled a devout observance of the season no less than the clergy of the High Church party. Burnet has been mentioned. Fleetwood's words, in his sermon before the King, on the 1st Sunday in Lent, 1717, are worth quoting. 'Our Church,' he said, 'hath erected this temporary house of mourning, wherein she would oblige us annually to enter. . . . And that we might attend more freely to these matters, she advises abstinence, and a prudent retrenchment of all those superfluities that minister to luxury more than necessity: by which the busy spirits are composed and quieted; the loose and scattered thoughts are recollected and brought home, and such a serious, sober frame of mind put on that we can think with less distraction, remember more exactly, pray with more fervency, repent more earnestly, and resolve with more deliberation on amendment. These are the beneficial fruits and effects of a reasonable, well-governed abstinence, as every one may find by their experience.'[1] John Wesley, as might naturally be expected from one who in many of his sympathies was so decidedly a High Churchman, was always in favour of a religious observance of Lent, especially of Holy Week. Steele, in a paper of the 'Guardian,' specially addressed, in Lent 1713, to careless men of pleasure, begs them not to ridicule a season set apart for humiliation. And passing mention may be made of indications, more or less trivial in themselves, of a tolerably general feeling throughout society that Lent was not quite what other seasons are, and ought not to be wholly disregarded. There were few marriages in Lent,[2] comparatively few entertainments, public or private;[3] in some cathedral towns the music of the choir was silent.[4] And just as Sunday is sometimes honoured only by the putting on of a better dress, so the fashionable world would often pay that easiest show of homage to the sacredness of the Lenten season, not by curtailing in any way their ordinary pleasures, but by going to the theatre in mourning.[5] Masquerades, too, were considered out of place, at all events unless they were disguised under another name—

> In Lent, if masquerades displease the town,
> Call them ridottos, and they still go down.[6]

In the Isle of Man, and there only, under the system of Church discipline set afoot and maintained in so remarkable a manner by

[1] Fleetwood's *Works*, 716.
[2] Johnson's *Vade-Mecum*, i. 189.
[3] E.g. Malcolm's *London*, &c., i. 18.
[4] Walcot's *Cathedrals*, &c. (of Rochester), 102.
[5] Doran's Note to *Horace Walpole's Journal*, i. 89.
[6] Bramston, quoted in id.

the influence of the venerable Bishop Wilson, Lent was celebrated with much of the solemnity and austerity of primitive times. Immediately before its commencement, courts of discipline were held, in which Church censures were duly passed and notified. During the forty days penances were performed, and Easter was the time for re-admission into the full communion of the Church.[1]

Throughout the country Lent was very commonly selected as a time specially appropriate for public catechizing.[2] 'A Presbyter of the Church of England,' writing in the first year of this century, said that, except among the Evangelical clergy, it was almost confined to that season.[3] Secker also, in the middle of the century, expressed a similar regret.[4]

'It was Passion Week,' writes Boswell, in 1772, 'that solemn season, which the Christian Church has appropriated to the commemoration of the mysteries of our Redemption, and during which, whatever embers of religion are in our breasts, will be kindled into pious warmth.'[5] He could hardly have written thus if Holy Week, and especially Good Friday, had not received at that time a fairly general observance. The rough treatment with which Bishop Porteus was requited[6] for his attempt to bring about a better regard for Good Friday might seem to show the contrary. But there was no period in the last century when throughout the country at large shops were not generally closed on that day, and the churches fairly attended.

In the Olney Hymns, published 1779, Christmas Day only is referred to among all the Christian seasons.[7] This was somewhat characteristic of the English Church in general during the greater part of the Georgian period. Other Christian seasons were often all but unheeded; Christmas was always kept much as it is now. It may be inferred, from a passage in one of Horsley's Charges, that in some country churches, towards the end of the century, there was no religious observance of the day.[8] But such neglect was altogether exceptional. The custom of carol-singing was continued only in a few places, more generally in Yorkshire than elsewhere.[9] There is some mention of it in the 'Vicar of Wake-

[1] C. Cruttwell's *Life of Bishop Wilson*, 370.
[2] *Life of Kettlewell*, 24. Paterson's *Pietas Londinensis*, Introduction. H. B. Wilson's *Hist. of Merchant Taylors*, 1075. Chr. Wordsworth's *Memoirs W. Wordsworth*, 8.
[3] *The Church of England Vindicated*, &c., 1801, 15.
[4] Secker's *Eight Charges*, 49. [5] Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, ii. 191.
[6] Beresford Hope, *Worship*, &c., 22.
[7] J. B. Pearson, in *Oxford Essays*, 1858, 165.
[8] Horsley's *Charges*, 114. [9] Brand's *Popular Antiq.* 1777, i. 491.

field ;' and one well-known carol, 'Christians, awake ! salute the happy morn !' was produced about the middle of the century by John Byrom. In George Herbert's time it had been a frequent custom on all great festivals to deck the church with boughs. This usage became almost, if not quite, obsolete except at Christmastide. We most of us remember with what sort of decorative skill the clerk was wont, at this season, to 'stick' the pews and pulpit with sprays of holly. In the time of the 'Spectator'[1] and of Gay,[2] and later still,[3] rosemary was also used, doubtless by old tradition, as referring in its name to the Mother of the Lord. Nor was mistletoe excluded.[4] In connection with this plant, Stanley says a curious custom was kept up at York, which in 1754 had not long been discontinued. 'On the eve of Christmas Day they carried mistletoe to the high altar of the cathedral and proclaimed a public and universal liberty, pardon, and freedom to all sorts of inferior and even wicked people, at the gates of the city, toward the four quarters of heaven.'[5] A number of other local customs, many of great antiquity, now at last disused, lingered on at Yule into the time of our grandfathers. On Christmas Day, Easter Day, and Whitsun Day there were very commonly two celebrations of the Holy Communion in the London churches.[6] In a few cases, especially during the earlier years of the century, there was a daily celebration during the octaves of these great festivals.[7] John Wesley, writing in 1777, makes mention that in London he was accustomed to observe the octave in this manner 'after the example of the Primitive Church.'[8] Throughout the latter part of the Georgian period little special notice seems to have been taken, in most churches, of Easter and Whitsuntide, and Ascension Day was very commonly not observed at all, except in towns.

As one among many other indications that at the beginning of the last century a shorter period than now had elapsed since the days that preceded the Reformation, it may be mentioned that 'Candlemas' was not only a well-known date, especially for changing the hours of service, but retained some traces of being still a festival under that name. For instance, it was specially observed at the Temple Church ;[9] and 'at Ripon, so late as 1790, on the Sunday before Candlemas Day, the Collegiate Church was

[1] *Spectator*, No. 282.
[2] Gay's *Trivia*, ii. 436.
[3] Walcot's *Cathedrals*, &c., 137.
[4] Gay's *Trivia*, ii. 442
[5] Stukeley's *Hist. of Carausius*, ii. 164. Quoted by Walcot, 137.
[6] Paterson's *Pietas Lond.*
[7] As at St. Dunstan's-in-the-West, &c., id. 80.
[8] See p. 68.
[9] *Piet. Lond.* 272.

one continued blaze of light all the afternoon, by an immense number of candles.'[1] Such traditions lingered in the north of England long after they had expired elsewhere.

It may be added that in Queen Anne's time we may still find the name of the Lord's Mother mentioned in a tone of affectionate respect not at all akin either to the timidity, in this respect, of later days, or to the somewhat defiant and overstrained veneration professed by some modern High Churchmen. Thus when Paterson begins to enumerate the London churches called after her name, he speaks of her in a perfectly natural tone as 'the Virgin Mary, the Mother of our ever-blessed Redeemer, Heaven's greatest darling among women.'[2]

In some of the London churches, as at St. Alban's, St. Alphege's, &c., special commemoration services were, in 1714, still kept in memory of the patron saints from whom they had been named.[3] In the country, at different intervals since the Reformation, there had been frequent and often angry discussions as to the propriety of continuing or suppressing the wakes which had been held from time immemorial on the dedication day of the parish church or on the eve of it.[4] The feeling of High Churchmen was now by no means so unanimous in their favour as it had been in Charles the First's reign. Bishop Bull, for instance, when he was yet rector of Avening, was quite alive to the evils of these often unruly festivals, and succeeded in getting them discontinued there.[5] Sometimes, where they had been held on the Sunday, a sort of compromise was effected, and, as at Claybrook, 'the church was filled on Sunday, and the Monday kept as a feast.'[6]

The parish perambulations customary in Rogation Week were generally less of a solemnity in the eighteenth than they had been in the seventeenth and preceding centuries.

> That every man might keep his own possessions,
> Our fathers used, in reverent processions,
> With zealous prayer, and with praiseful cheere,
> To walk their parish limits once a year.[7]

George Herbert, and Hooker, and many old worthies, had taken great pleasure in maintaining this old custom, thinking it serviceable not only for the preservation of parish rights and liberties, but for pious thanksgiving, for keeping up cordial feeling between

[1] Walcot's *Cathedrals*, &c., 137.
[2] Paterson's *Pietas Londinensis*, 157.
[3] Id.
[4] *Spectator*, No. 161, Sept. 4, 1711.
[5] Nelson's *Life of Bull*, 312.
[6] Macaulay's *History of Claybrook*, 1791, 93, quoted by Brand, ii. 12.
[7] Wither's *Emblems*, 1635, quoted by Brand.

rich and poor, and for mutual kindnesses and making up of differences.[1] Sometimes, however, the religious part of the ceremony was altogether omitted ; and sometimes these 'gang-days' provided an occasion for tumultuous contests or for intemperance,[2] or served mainly as a pretext for a churchwardens' feast.[3] We find Secker in 1750 recommending his clergy to keep up the old practice, but to guard it from abuse, and to use the thanksgivings, prayers, and sentences enjoined by Queen Elizabeth.[4] At Wolverhampton, until about 1765, 'the sacrist, resident prebendaries, and members of the choir, assembled at morning prayers on Monday and Tuesday in Rogation Week, with the charity children bearing long poles clothed with all kinds of flowers then in season, and which were afterwards carried through the streets of the town with much solemnity, the clergy, singing men and boys, dressed in their sacred vestments, closing the procession, and chanting in a grave and appropriate melody the "Benedicite." The boundaries of the parish were marked in many points by Gospel trees, where the Gospel was read.'[5]

Days appointed by authority of the State for services of humiliation or of thanksgiving were far more frequent in the earlier part of the last century than they are now. In King William's time there were monthly fasts throughout the war, every first Wednesday in the month being thus set apart.[6] Thus also, during the period when success after success attended the arms of Marlborough, there were never many months passed by without a day of thanksgiving. During the civil wars of the preceding century fast days had been very frequent. To a certain extent no doubt they had been used on either side as political weapons of party ; but they were also genuinely congenial to the excited religious feeling of the nation, solemn appeals to the overruling power which guides the destinies of men. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, although religious energies were so far more languid than they had been in the preceding age, the great war that was raging on the Continent was still regarded somewhat in the light of a crusade. Not that it inspired enthusiasm, or awoke any spirit of romance. There was no such high-strung emotion in those who anxiously watched its progress. Still it was generally felt to be a struggle in which great religious principles were involved. The Protestant interest and the religious future of the Church and State of England were felt to be

[1] J. Walton's *Life of Hooker*.—Hooker's *Works*, 1850, i. 63.
[2] Secker's *Charges*, 143.
[3] Wilson's *Hist. of St. Lawrence Pountney*, 114.
[4] Secker's *Charges*, 143. [5] J. Brand's *Popular Antiquities*, i. 199.
[6] De Foe's *Works*, Chalmers, vol. xx. 8, note.

deeply concerned in its ultimate issues. And thus a good deal of half-religious, half-political feeling was centred on these appointed days of solemn fast or thanksgiving. The prayer for unity, calling upon the people to take to heart the dangers they were in by their unhappy divisions, seems to have been very generally read upon these occasions.[1] A political element in them was always clearly recognised by the Nonjurors. The more moderate among them, who attended other services of the National Church, would not, except in rare instances, attend these. 'They held that to be present on such special occasions, which were significant of a direct purpose, was to profess allegiance to the new reigning family, and therefore an act of dissimulation; but not so their attendance on the ordinary services.'[2]

The prayers appointed for these set days of humiliation appear to have often had the reputation of being neither impressive nor edifying. Whiston spoke, indeed, in the highest terms of a prayer drawn up by Tenison on occasion of the great hurricane of 1703. He thought it a model composition, unequalled in modern and unsurpassed in ancient times.[3] But its excellences, he added, were especially marked by the strong contrast with the jejune and courtly formulas which usually characterized such prayers, and most of all those which had been written for the days of fasting during the war.[4] They were, too commonly, examples of the bad custom, scarcely to be extenuated by long established precedent, of clothing in the outward form of adulation of powers that be, what was ordinarily meant for nothing worse than expressions of patriotic loyalty. Another frequent fault of these special prayers was uncharitableness. Gilbert Wakefield speaks in particular of an 'execrable prayer against the Americans,' and of the storms which threatened him when he 'read it, but with the omission of all those unchristian words and clauses which constituted the very life and soul of the composition to the generality of hearers.'[5]

The two anniversaries of January 30 and November 5 gave rise—especially the former—to a whole literature of special sermons, the great majority of which should never have been preached, or at least never published. Extreme men on either side delighted in the favourable opportunity presented by the one or the other of these two days of airing their respective opinions on subjects which could not yet be discussed without excitement. Protestant ardour, scarcely satisfied with commemorating Gun-

[1] *A Collection of Parl. Protests*, 1737, 164.
[2] *Life of Ken*, by a Layman, ii. 653.
[3] Whiston's *Memoirs*, 1749, 132.
[4] Id. and 406.
[5] G. Wakefield's *Memoirs*, 1792, 182.

powder Treason in Church services which matched in language the bonfires of the evening, found scope also for Antipapal demonstrations in other and more distant reminiscences. November 27, the anniversary of Elizabeth's accession, had been celebrated in London in 1679 with the most elaborate processions.[1] In the earlier part of the eighteenth century it was still a great day in some parishes for riotous meetings,[2] and was solemnised in some churches with special sermons and religious services.[3] On the 14th or 20th of August there were also commemorative sermons in several London churches in remembrance of the defeat of the Armada.[4] At St. Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside, this custom still survives.

Throughout the eighteenth century the old laws which required due attendance on public worship were still in force. They were, in fact, formally confirmed in the thirty-first year of George the Third ;[5] and however much they had fallen into neglect, they were not removed from the statute-book till the ninth and tenth years of the present reign.[6] We are told, however, that when the Toleration Act was passed in 1689, by one of the chief provisions of which persons who frequented a legal dissenting congregation were excused from all penalties for not coming to church, there was a general and observable falling off in the attendance at divine worship.[7] Hitherto congregations had been swelled by numbers who went for no better reason than because it was the established rule of the realm that they must go. Henceforward, mistaken or not, it was the popular impression that people 'had full liberty to go to church or stay away ; and the services were much deserted in favour of the ale-houses.'[8] At the beginning, however, of the eighteenth century, the churches were once again fuller than they had been for some time previously. Dissent was at that time thoroughly unpopular ; and the practice of occasional conformity brought a considerable number of moderate Dissenters into church. It was observed that churches in London which once had been very thinly attended now had overflowing congregations.[9] Unfortunately, this revival of church attendance was not long-lived. Year after year it continued to fall off, until it had become in

[1] Malcolm's *Manners and Customs of London*, ii. 16–19.
[2] Id. 23.
[3] Brand's *Pop. Antiq.* i. 406–8.
[4] Paterson's *Pietas Lond.* 23, 154, 164.
[5] Burn's *Eccl. Law.* iii. 235.
[6] H. J. Stephen's *Commentaries on the Laws*, 1858, iii. 54.
[7] Dean Prideaux' *Life and Letters*, 1747, 95, and R. South's *Sermons*, 1823, iv. 186.
[8] Prideaux, as above.
[9] Burnet, quoted in J. Hunt's *Hist. of Rel. Thought in E.* iii. 223.

many parts of the country deplorably small. In 1738 Secker deplored the 'greatly increased disregard to public worship.'[1] It was never neglected in England so much as during the corresponding period in Germany. Even in the worst of times, as a modern writer has truly observed, the average Englishman never failed to acknowledge that attendance at church or chapel was his duty.[2] Only it was a duty which, as time went on, was continually less regarded alike in the upper and lower grades of society. Bishop Newton, speaking in 1768 of Mr. Grenville, evidently regarded his 'regularly attending the service of the church every Sunday morning, even while he was in the highest offices,' as something altogether exceptional in a Minister of State.[3] His namesake, John Newton, the well-known writer of 'Cardiphonia' and the 'Olney Hymns,' says that when he was Rector of St. Mary, Woolnoth, in London, few of his wealthy parishioners came to church.[4] Religious reformers, towards the end of the century, awoke with alarm to the perception of serious evil, betokened by the general thinness of congregations. The migration of population from the centre of London to its suburbs had already set in; but the following assertion was sufficiently startling nevertheless. 'The amazing and afflictive desertion of all our churches is a fact beyond doubt or dispute. In the heart of the city of London, in its noblest edifices, on the Lord's day, repeated instances have been known that a single individual hath not attended the divine service.'[5] Another writer observes, in similar language, that 'the greater part of our churches, particularly in the metropolis, present a most unedifying and afflicting spectacle to the eyes of the sincere, unenthusiastic Christian.' 'Attendance was almost everywhere,' he adds, 'most shamefully small.'[6] Some of the remoter parts of England seemed to be absolutely in danger of relapsing into literal heathenism. Hannah More said, in a letter to John Newton (1796), that in one parish in her neighbourhood, 'of nearly two hundred children, many of them grown up, hardly any had ever seen the inside of a church since they were christened. I cannot tell you the avidity with which the Scriptures were received by many of these poor creatures.'[7] But things had indeed come to a pass in the country district where this indefatigable lady pursued her

[1] Secker's *Eight Charges*, 6.

[2] B. Hope, *Worship in the Ch. of E.*, 10. Secker makes the same remark, *Eight Charges*, 295.

[3] Bishop Newton's *Life and Works*, i. 115.

[4] J. Newton's *Memoirs*, 54.

[5] *The Church of England Vindicated*, 1801, 40.

[6] *Considerations on the Present State of Religion*, 1801, 21, 29.

[7] H. More's *Memoirs*, i. 573.

Christian labour. 'We have in this neighbourhood thirteen adjoining parishes without so much as even a resident curate.'[1] Of such villages she might well add, that they 'are in Pagan darkness, and upon many of them scarcely a ray of Christianity has shone. I speak from the most minute and diligent examination.'[2] No doubt the locality of which she spoke was suffering under very exceptional neglect; but somewhat similar instances could have been produced in other parts of England. A hundred years earlier, Ralph Thoresby, travelling in Yorkshire, had expressed his amazement that 'on the Lord's Day we rode from church to church and found four towns without sermon or prayers.'[3] This is scarcely the place to enter further into the degree of spiritual destitution which prevailed in many parts of England, and into the causes which brought it about. It may be enough here to remark that the re-quickening of religious activity in the Church of England, mainly through the labours of clergy and laymen of the Evangelical school, came none too soon.

It should be added that, owing mainly to the thoroughly bad system of bundling three or four poor livings together, in order to provide respectable maintenance for a clergyman, it was very common in country places to have only one service on the Sunday. Nothing could be more likely than this to promote laxity of attendance at divine worship.

Dean Sherlock, in a treatise upon religious assemblies published by him in 1681, remarked severely upon the unseemly behaviour which was constantly to be seen in church—the looking about, the whispering, the talking, the laughing, the deliberate reclining for sleep. Whether it had arisen out of contempt for all the externals of worship, or whether it were owing rather to a wild fear of any semblance of fanaticism or of hypocrisy, this rude and slovenly conduct had come, he said, to a great height, and brought great scandal upon our worship. The essayists of Queen Anne's reign made a steady and laudable effort to shame people out of these indecorous ways. The 'Spectator' constantly recurs to the subject. At one time it is the Starer who comes in for his reprobation. The Starer posts himself upon a hassock, and from this point of eminence impertinently scrutinises the congregation, and puts the ladies to the blush.[4] In another paper he represents an Indian chief describing his visit to a London church. There is a tradition, the illustrious visitor says, that the building had been originally designed for devotion, but there was very little trace of this remaining. Certainly there was a

[1] H. More's *Memoirs*, i. 656.
[2] Id. 458.
[3] R. Thoresby's *Diary* (of 1684), i. 178.
[4] *Spectator*, No. 20.

man in black, mounted above the rest, and uttering something with a good deal of vehemence. But people were not listening; they were most of them bowing and curtseying to one another.[1] Or a distinguished Dissenter came to church. 'After the service was over, he declared he was very well satisfied with the little ceremony which was used towards God Almighty, but at the same time he feared he was not well bred enough to be a convert.'[2]

Addison, however, and his fellow-writers, who might be abundantly quoted to a similar effect, succeeded in making their readers more sensible than they had been of the impropriety of all such conduct. During the latter half of the century, the careless and undevout could no longer have ventured, without fear of censure, on the irreverent familiarities in church which they could have freely indulged in for the first twenty years of it.[3]

Polwhele, remarks that in Truro Church, about the year 1800, he had seen several people sitting with their hats on,[4] as they might have done at Geneva, or in the time of the older Puritans. This, however, was something wholly exceptional at that date. One of the things which had displeased English Churchmen in William the Third was this Dutch habit. He so far yielded to their feeling as to uncover during the prayers, but put on his hat again for the sermon.[5] A minute in the Representation of the Lower House of Convocation, during their session of 1701,[6] shows that this irreverent custom was then not very unfrequent. After all, this was but a very little matter as compared with gross desecrations such as happened here and there in remote country places during the last ten years of the preceding century. 'Amongst the Lambeth archives is a very long letter by Edmund Bowerman, vicar of Codrington, who gives a curious account of his parish. The people played cards on the communion table; and when they met to choose churchwardens, sat with their hats on, smoking and drinking, the clerk gravely saying, with a pipe in his mouth, that such had been the practice for the last sixty years.'[7] This was in 1692. In 1693, Queen Mary wrote to Dean Hooper that she had been to Canterbury Cathedral for the

[1] *Spectator*, No. 50. [2] Id. No. 259.

[3] The scandalous interruptions during service which C. Simeon met with (1792–5) were, of course, of a different nature.—*Simeon's Memoirs*, 86–92.

[4] R. Polwhele's Introduction to *Lavington*, ccxliv.

[5] Tindal, vol. i. and *Somers Tracts*, x. 349, quoted in W. Palin's *Hist. of the Ch. of E. from* 1688 *to* 1717, 218. [6] Quoted in id. 228.

[7] *Gibson Papers*, v. 9. Quoted in J. Stoughton's *Church of the Revolution*, 324.

Sunday morning service, and in the afternoon went to a parish church. 'She heard there a very good sermon, but she thought herself in a Dutch church, for the people stood on the communion table to look at her.'[1]

Throughout the eighteenth century, a variety of secular matters used to be published, sometimes by custom and sometimes by law, during the time of divine service. In a general ignorance of letters, when a paper on the church door would have been an almost useless form, such notices were to a great extent almost necessary. But in themselves they were ill becoming the place and time; and a statute passed in the first year of our present sovereign has now made them illegal.[2] The publication just before the sermon of poor-rate assessment, and of days of appeal in matters of house or window tax,[3] must often have had a very distracting effect upon ratepayers who otherwise might have listened calmly to the arguments and admonitions of their pastor. John Johnson, writing in 1709, remarked with much truth that it was quite scandalous for hue-and-cries, and enquiries after lost goods, to be published in church.[4] Even in our own generation, Mr. Beresford Hope, telling what he himself remembers, records how in the church he frequented as a boy, the clerk would make such announcements after the repeating of the Nicene Creed, or of meetings at the town hall of the executors of a late duke.[5]

It was chiefly in the earlier part of the period that an observer visiting one church after another would have noticed the great differences in points of order. Such departures from uniformity were slight as compared to what they had been in the reigns of Elizabeth or Charles the First, yet were sufficient to arouse considerable uneasiness in the minds of many friends of the Church, as well as to point many sarcasms from some of its opponents. There were some special reasons for disquietude in those who feared to diverge a hand-breadth from the established rule. Although since the Restoration, the Church of England was undoubtedly popular, and had acquired, out of the very troubles through which she had passed, a venerable and well-tried aspect, there was, in the earlier part of the eighteenth century, a wide-spread feeling of instability both in ecclesiastical and political matters, to an extent no longer easy to be realised. No one felt sure what Romish and Jacobite machinations might not yet effect. For if the Stuarts remounted

[1] Hooper's MS., quoted by Palin, 220.
[2] Cripps's *Laws of the Church*, 675.
[3] R. Burn's *Eccles. Law*, iii. 273.
[4] Johnson's *Vade Mecum*, i. 281.
[5] *Worship in the Church of England*, 9.

the throne, Rome might yet recover ascendancy. The Protestantism of the country was not yet absolutely secure. And therefore many Churchmen who, if they consulted their feelings only, would have been thoroughly in accord with the Laudean divines in their love of a more ornate ritual, were content to stand fast by such simple ceremonies as were everywhere acknowledged to be the rule. However much they might have a right to claim as their legitimate due usages which their rubrics seemed to authorise, and which were scarcely unfrequent even in the days of Heylyn and Cosin, they were not disposed to insist upon what would in their day be considered as innovations in the direction of Rome. Better to widen that breach rather than in any way to lessen it. So, too, with men of a different tone of mind, who, so far as their own tastes went, disliked all ceremonial and thought it rather an impediment than a help to devotion, and who would have been glad if the Church of England had approximated more closely to the habits of Presbyterians and Independents. They, too, in the early part of the last century felt, for the most part, they must be cautious, if they would be loyal to the communion to which they had yielded allegiance. If they indulged in Presbyterian fancies, they might perchance bring in the Presbyterians, an exchange which they were not the least prepared to make. The Dutch propensities of William, the ratification of Scotch Presbyterianism in the reign of Anne, the frequent alarm cry of Church in danger, made it seem quite possible that if civil dissensions should arise, Presbyterianism might yet lift up its head and find a wealthier home in the deaneries and rectories of England. And so they were more inclined to control their sympathies in that direction than they might have been under other circumstances. It may be added, the extreme vehemence, not to say virulence of party feeling, in ecclesiastical as in political matters, which prevailed in England so long as a decisive and universally recognised settlement was yet in suspense, obliged both High and Low Churchmen to keep tolerably close to the strict letter of the Act of Uniformity. When so much jealousy and mutual animosity were abroad, neither the one nor the other could venture, without raising a storm of opprobrium, to test to what extreme limits its utmost elasticity could be strained.

Notwithstanding such considerations, differences in religious opinion within the Church, especially as to those points which the Puritan controversy had brought into prominence, did not fail to find expression in the modes and usages of worship. Something has been already said on this point, in speaking of the furniture of churches, the decoration of the sanctuary, and the observance of fasts and festivals. What has now to be

added relates rather to varieties in the manner of conducting services.

The rubric which occupies so prominent a place in our Prayer-book, stating 'that such ornaments of the Church and of the Ministers thereof, at all times of their ministration, shall be retained and be in use, as were in the Church of England, by the authority of Parliament, in the second year of the reign of King Edward VI.,' was of course not forgotten—as indeed it could not be—in the eighteenth century. High Churchmen not unfrequently called attention to it. John Johnson, writing in 1709, said he was by no means single in his belief that this order was still legally enjoined.[1] Archbishop Sharp appears to have been of the same opinion, and used to say that he preferred the Communion office as it was in King Edward's Book.[2] Nicholls, in his edition (1710) of Bishop Cosin's annotated Prayer-book, insisted upon the continuous legality of the vestments prescribed in the old rubric, which was 'the existing law,' he said, 'still in force at this day.'[3] Bishop Gibson, the learned author of the 'Codex Juris Ecclesiastici' (1711), although he marked the rubric as practically obsolete, steadily maintained that legally the ornaments of ministers in performing Divine Service were the same as they had been in the earlier Liturgy.[4] In Charles I.'s reign the rubric had been by no means obsolete. But after the Restoration the use of the more ornate vestments was not revived. Even the cope, though prescribed for use as an Eucharistic vestment in cathedrals and collegiate churches, had become almost obsolete. Norwich, Westminster, and Durham seem to have been the only exceptions. At Norwich, however, the cope, presented by the High Sheriff of Norfolk in the place of one that had been burnt during the Civil War,[5] does not appear to have been much worn. Those at Westminster were reserved for great state occasions, such as Coronations and Royal funerals.[6] It was only at Durham that the cope was constantly used on all festival days. Defoe wrote in 1727 that they were still worn by some of the residents, and he then described them as 'rich with embroidery and embossed work of silver, that indeed it was a kind of load to stand under them.'[7] A story is sometimes told of Warburton, when Prebendary of Durham in 1759, throwing off his cope in a pet, and never

[1] J. Johnson's *Vade Mecum*, i. 21.
[2] *Life of Archbishop Sharp*, by his Son, i. 355.
[3] B. Hope, *Worship*, &c., 109, 129.
[4] Gibson's *Codex Jur. Eccl.* 363, 472. This opinion is referred to with approval in *An Account of London Parishes*, &c.
[5] Blomefield's *Hist. of Norwich*, quoted in id. 140.
[6] A. P. Stanley's *Memoirs of Westminster Abbey*, 192.
[7] Defoe's *Tour*, 1727, iii. 189, also Thoresby's *Diary*, i. 60.

wearing it again, because it disturbed his wig.[1] Their use does not seem to have been totally discontinued until 1784.[2]

The surplice was of course, throughout the period, the universally recognised vestment of the Church of England clergy. Not that it had altogether outlived the unreasoning hatred with which it was regarded by ultra-Protestants outside the National Church. It was still in the earlier part of the century inveighed against by some of their writers as 'a Babylonish garment,'[3] 'a rag of the whore of Babylon,'[4] a 'habit of the priests of Isis.'[5] In William III.'s time, its use in the pulpit was evidently quite exceptional. The writer of a letter in the Strype Correspondence —one of those in whose eyes a surplice was 'a fool's coat'—making mention that on the previous day (in 1696) he had seen a minister preach in one, added that to the best of his remembrance he had never but once seen this before.[6] During the next reign the custom was more common, but was looked upon as a decided mark of High Churchmanship. There is an expressive, and amusingly inconsequential 'though' in the following note from Thoresby's Diary for June 17, 1722 : 'Mr. Rhodes preached well (though in his surplice).'[7] In villages, however, it was very frequently worn, not so much from any idea of its propriety as what Pasquin in the 'Tatler' is made to call 'the most conscientious dress,'[8] but simply from its being the only vestment provided by the parish. Too frequently it betrayed in its appearance, 'dirty and contemptible with age,'[9] a careless indifference quite in keeping with other externals of worship. At the end of the seventeenth century many Low Church clergy were wont so far to violate the Act of Uniformity as often not to wear the surplice at all in church. They would sometimes wear it, said South, in a sermon preached in King William's reign, and oftener lay it aside.[10] Such irregularities appear, however, to have been nearly discontinued in Queen Anne's time.[11] About this date, the growing habit among clergymen of wearing a wig is said to have caused an alteration from the older form of the surplice. It was no longer sewn up and drawn over the head, but made open in front.[12]

[1] B. Hope, *Worship*, &c., 138. [2] *Gent. Mag.* for 1804, quoted in id.
[3] *The Scourge*, by T. Lewis, Feb. 11, 1717.
[4] Sherlock, *On Public Worship*, 114. [5] *The Scourge*, May 16, 1717.
[6] Quoted in Stoughton's *Church of the Revolution*, 323.
[7] R. Thoresby's *Diary*, ii. 341. [8] *Tatler*, No. 129.
[9] Secker's *Eight Charges*, 182.
[10] R. South's *Sermons*, iv. 191, also *Strype Corresp.* quoted by Stoughton, *Ch. of the Rev.*, 323.
[11] Mr. Wordsworth, however, mentions a portrait of 1730, showing the interior of an English church in which the celebrant at the Eucharist is robed in a black gown.—*Univ. Soc. in the Eighteenth Cent.*, 533.
[12] Walcot's *Cathedrals*, &c., 121.

Those who abominated the surplice had looked with aversion on the academical hood. Even in the middle of the eighteenth century, some Low Church clergymen—they would hardly be graduates of either University—objected to its use. Christopher Pitt, recommending preachers to sort their sermons to their hearers, bids them, for example, not to be so indiscreet as to 'rail at hoods and organs at St. Paul's.'[1]

Next, says Addison, after the clergy of the highest rank, such as bishops, deans, and archdeacons, come 'doctors of divinity, prebendaries and all that wear scarfs.'[2] It was an object therefore of some ambition in his day to wear a scarf. There was many a clerical fop, we are told in a later paper of the 'Spectator,' who would wear it when he came up to London, that he might be mistaken for a dignitary of the Church, and be called 'doctor' by his landlady and by the waiter at Child's Coffee House.[3] Noblemen also claimed a right of conferring a scarf upon their chaplains. In this case, those who knew the galling yoke that a chaplaincy too often was, might well entitle it 'a badge of servitude,' and 'a silken livery.'[4]

At this point, a short digression may be permitted on the subject of clerical dress during the last century.

In the time of Swift and the 'Spectator,' clergymen generally wore their gowns when they travelled in the streets of London.[5] But they wore them, so Hearne says, with a difference, very characteristic of those days of hot party strife. The Tory clergy only wore the M.A. gown; 'the Whigs and enemies of the Universities go in pudding-sleeve gowns,'[6] or what was otherwise called the 'crape' or 'mourning gown.' In the country the correct clerical dress was simply the cassock. Fielding's genius has made good Parson Adams a familiar picture to most readers of English literature. We picture him careless of appearances, tramping along the muddy lanes with his cassock tucked up under his short great-coat.[7] A clergyman, writing in 1722, upon 'the hardships and miseries of the inferior clergy in and about London,' compares with some bitterness the threadbare garments of the curate with 'the flaming gown and cassock' of the non-resident

[1] Christopher Pitt's *Art of Preaching*, c. 1740. Anderson's *Br. Poets*, viii. 821.

[2] *Spectator*, No. 21.

[3] Id. No. 609.

[4] Id., and Oldham, in the *Tatler*, No. 255.

[5] Swift's 'Project for the Adv. of Rel.'—*Works*, ix. 97. *Spectator*, No. 608.

[6] Hearne's *Reliq.* Feb. 1719–20, quoted in Chr. Wordsworth, *Univ. Soc. in Eighteenth Century*, 36, 516.

[7] Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*, b. i. chap. 16, b. ii. chaps. 3, 7, &c.

rector. He could wish, he said ('if the wish were canonical')[1] that he might appear in a common habit rather than in a clerical garb which only excited derision by its squalor. He thought it a desirable recommendation to the religious and charitable societies of the day, that they should make gifts to the poorer clergy of new gowns and cassocks.[2] Soon, however, after Fielding's time, the cassock gradually fell into disuse as an ordinary part of a clergyman's dress. It was still worn by many throughout the Sunday; but on week days was regarded as somewhat stiff and formal, even by those who insisted most on the proprieties.[3] Ever since the Restoration, the old strictness about clerical dress had become more and more relaxed. The square cap had been out of favour during the Commonwealth, and was not generally resumed.[4] The canonical skull-cap was next supplanted—not without much scandal to persons of grave and staid habit—by the fashionable peruke.[5] There is a letter from the Duke of Monmouth, then Chancellor of Cambridge, to the Vice-Chancellor and University, October 8, 1674, in which this innovation is severely condemned.[6] A few years later, Archbishop Tillotson himself set the example of wearing the obnoxious article.[7] Many country incumbents not only dropped all observance of the old canonical regulations, but lowered the social character of their profession by making themselves undistinguishable in outward appearance from farmers or common graziers. South spoke of this in one of his sermons, preached towards the end of William III.'s reign.[8] So also did Swift in 1731.[9] The Dean, however, himself seems to have been a glaring offender against that sobriety of garb which befits a clergyman. In his journal to Stella, he speaks in one place of wearing 'a light camlet, faced with red velvet and silver buckles.'[10] Of course eccentricities which Dean Swift allowed himself must not be taken as examples of what others ventured upon. But carelessness in

[1] Cf. C. Churchill's *Independence*:—

> 'O'er a brown cassock which had once been black,
> Which hung in tatters o'er his brawny back.'

[2] *Hardships, &c., of the Inf. Clergy*, in a letter to the Bishop of London, 1722, 20, 93, 246.

[3] *Admonition to the Younger Clergy*, 1764, and *Philagoretes on the Pulpit*, &c., quoted by Chr. Wordsworth, *Universities*, &c., 526, 529.

[4] J. C. Jeaffreson's *B. of the Clergy*, ii. 253.

[5] *Mrs. Abigail, &c., with some Free Thoughts on the Pretended Dignity of the Clergy*, 1700.

[6] Quoted in *Justice and Necessity of Restraining the Clergy*, &c., 1715, 41.

[7] Jeaffreson, ii. 251.

[8] R. South's *Sermons*, vol. iv. 192.

[9] Dean Swift's *Works*, vol. viii. 313.

[10] Chap. iii. p. 26, quoted in A. Andrews' *Eighteenth Century*.

all such matters went on increasing till about the seventh decade of the century. After that time a number of remonstrances and protests may be found against the brown coats, the plaid or white waistcoats, the white stockings, the leathern breeches, the scratch wigs, and so forth, in which clerical fops on the one hand, and clerical slovens on the other, were often wont to appear. A writer at the very end of the century pointed his remarks on the subject by calling the attention of his brother clergy to the distinctly anti-Christian purpose which had animated the French Convention in their suppression of the clerical habit.[1]

If a modern Churchman could be carried back to the days of Queen Anne, and were at Church while service was going on, his eye would probably be caught by people standing up where he had been accustomed to see them sitting, and sitting down when, in our congregations, every one would be standing up. Some people, following the common custom of the Puritans, stood during the prayers.[2] Some, on the other hand, sat during the creed.[3] In both these cases there was plain neglect of the rubric. Where the Prayer-book was silent, uncertainty and variation of usage were more reasonable. Thus some stood at the Epistle, as well as at the Gospel,[4] and some whenever the second lesson was from one of the Evangelists.[5] What Cowper calls the 'divorce of knees from hassocks,' was perhaps not so frequent then as now.[6] In pictures of church interiors of that date, the congregation is generally represented as really kneeling. Still, it was much too frequent, and quite fell in with the careless, self-indulgent habits of the time. Before the middle of the century it had become very general. In one of the papers of the 'Tatler,' we find there were some who neither stood nor knelt, but remained lazily sitting throughout the service like 'an audience at a playhouse.'[7] Sitting while the Psalms were being sung was, notwithstanding many remonstrances, the rule rather

[1] *Considerations Addressed to the Clergy*, 1798, 14.

[2] *Spectator*, No. 455. Burnet, as a matter of opinion, thought this more consonant with primitive usage, and, except during confession, more expressive of the feelings of faith and confidence. *Four Discourses*, &c., 1694, 323. [3] *The Scourge*, 1720, No. 3.

[4] Cruttwell's *Life of Bishop Wilson*, 12; and Fleetwood's 'Letter to an Inhabitant of St. Andrew's, Holborn,' 1717 — *Works*, 1737, 722-3. [5] Id.

[6] Towards the end of the century, on the other hand, there were many churches where kneeling was sufficiently uncommon as almost to call special attention. Thus Admiral Austen was remarked upon as '*the* officer who kneeled at church' (Jane Austen's *Memoirs*, 23); and C. Simeon writes in his *Diary*, '1780, March 8. Kneeled down before service; nor do I see any impropriety in it. Why should I be afraid or ashamed of all the world seeing me do my duty?' (*Memoirs*, 19).

[7] *Tatler*, No. 241.

than the exception during the earlier part of the century. The Puritan commission of 1641 had spoken of standing at the hymns as an innovation.[1] Even Sherlock, in 1681, speaks of 'that universal practice of sitting while we sing the Psalms.'[2] In 1717, Fleetwood speaks of standing at such times as if it were a singularity rather than otherwise.[3] Hickes, on the other hand, writes in 1701, as if those who refused to stand at the singing of psalms and anthems were for the most part 'stiff, morose, and saturnine votists.'[4] In fact, High Churchmen insisted on the one posture, while Low Churchmen generally preferred the other; and so the custom remained very variable, until the High Church reaction of Queen Anne's time succeeded in establishing, in this particular, a rule which was henceforth generally recognised. In 1741, Secker speaks of sitting during the singing as if, though common enough, it were still a mere careless habit.[5]

At the beginning of the century many who had been brought up in Puritan traditions thoroughly disliked the custom of congregational responses. They called it 'a tossing of tennis balls,'[6] and set it down as one of the points of formalism.[7] Partly, perhaps, from a little of this sort of feeling, but far more often for no other reason than a lack of devotional spirit, that cold and most unattractive custom, which prevailed throughout the Georgian age, of making the clerk the mouthpiece of the congregation, fast gained ground. This, however, was much less general in the earlier part of the period than at its close. In Queen Anne's time there were many zealous Churchmen who both by word and example endeavoured to give a more hearty character to the public worship, and who thought that such 'unconcerned silence[8] was a much greater evil than the risk of an occasional 'Stentor who bellowed terribly loud in the responses.'[9] Most people are familiar with the paper in the 'Spectator,' which describes Sir Roger de Coverley at church, and his patriarchal care that his tenants and dependents should all have prayer-books, that they might duly take their part in the service.[10]

The period which immediately followed the Revolution of 1689 was not one when minor questions of ritual, upon which there was difference of opinion between the two principal parties in the

[1] J. Hunt, *Relig. Thought in England*, i. 197.
[2] Sherlock *On Public Worship*, 1681, ii. ch. 2.
[3] Fleetwood's *Works*, 1737, 723.
[4] G. Hickes, *Devotions*, &c., second ed., 1701, Pref.
[5] Second Charge, 1741, Secker's *Eight Charges*, 1769.
[6] T. Bisse, *The Beauty of Holiness*, eighth ed. 1721, 50, note.
[7] J. Watts, 'Miscellaneous Thoughts'—*Works*, ix. 380.
[8] *Tatler*, No. 241. [9] *Spectator*, No. 112. [10] Id. No. 54.

English Church, were likely to rest in peace. Turning eastward at the creeds was a case in point. There was quite a literature upon the subject. Many Low Churchmen, among whom may be mentioned Asplin, Hoadly, and Lord Chancellor King, contended that it was a papal or pagan superstition which ought to be wholly discontinued. The High Church writers, such as Cave, Meade, Bingham, Smallbroke, Whiston, Wesley, and Bisse, answered that it was not only the universal custom in the primitive Church, but edifying and impressive in itself as symbolising unity in the faith, hope of resurrection, and expectation of our Saviour's coming. The usage was very generally maintained.

The injunction of the 17th Canon, to bow with reverence when the name of the Lord Jesus is mentioned in time of divine service, was observed much as now. In the recital of the Creed it was the general custom. At other times, High Churchmen were for the most part careful to observe the practice,[1] and Low Churchmen did not. Later in the century the canon was probably observed much more generally in country villages than among town congregations. Bisse observed that it was a primitive usage which ought least of all to be dropped at a time when Arian opinions were abroad.[2]

At the close of the seventeenth century we find South and others bitterly complaining of the liberties taken with the Prayer-book by some of the 'Moderate' clergy. Some prayers, it appears, were omitted, and some were shortened, and in one form or another 'the divine service so curtailed,' says South in his exaggerated way, 'as if the people were to have but the tenths from the priest, for the tenths he had received from them.'[3] No doubt the expectation of immediate changes in the liturgy, and the knowledge that some of the bishops were leaders in that movement, had an unsettling effect, adapted to encourage irregularities. At all events we hear little more of it, when the agitation in favour of comprehension had ceased. There was often a lax observance of the rubrics;[4] but there appear to be no complaints of any serious omissions, until three or four of the Arian and semi-Arian clergy ventured, not only to leave out the

[1] Bingham's *Works*, ix. 259. Cruttwell, 12. Walcott, 204. *Somers Tracts*, ix. 507. Watts's *Works*, ix. 380. Wakefield's *Memoirs*, 156. *The Scourge*, No. 3.

[2] Bisse, *Beauty of Holiness*, 145.

[3] South's *Works*, iv. 191.

[4] Lathbury's *Hist. of the Nonjurors*, 156, 507–8. Parry's *Hist. of the Ch. of E.*, iii. 165.

Athanasian Creed, but to alter the doxologies,[1] and to pass over the second and third petitions of the Litany.[2]

The Athanasian Creed, however, might fairly be said to stand on a somewhat different footing. If it had been a pain and a stumbling-block only to those who had adopted Whiston's opinions about the Trinity, men to whom the ordinary prayers could not fail to give offence, it would have been clear that such persons had no standing-ground in the ministry of the Church of England. But the case was notoriously otherwise. Persons who have not the least inclination to adopt heterodox opinions, may most reasonably object to the use in public worship of elaborate scholastic definitions on questions of acknowledged mystery. Those clergymen, therefore, whether in the eighteenth or in the nineteenth century, who have been accustomed to neglect the rubric which prescribes the use of this Creed on certain days, might feel reasonably justified in so doing, on the tacit understanding that, at the demand of the bishop they should either read the formula, notwithstanding their general dislike to it, or give up their office in the Church. No doubt it was quite as often omitted in the last century as in our own ;[3] and in George III.'s time, even if a desire had existed to enforce its use, there would have been the more difficulty in doing so from its having been forbidden in the King's Chapel.[4]

The habit of reading continuously, as parts of one service, Morning Prayer, the Litany, and part of the office for the Communion, had hardly become fixed at the commencement of the century. John Johnson,[5] writing in 1709, said it was an innovation. The old custom had been to have, on Sundays and holy days, prayers at six, and the Litany at nine, followed after a few minutes' interval by the Communion service. Even in Charles I.'s time they had often become joined, as a concession to the later hours that were gradually gaining ground, or, as Heylin expressed it, 'because of the sloth of the people.' But 'long after the Restoration' the distinction was maintained in some places, as in the Cathedrals of Canterbury and Worcester. And throughout the last century, 'Second Service' was a name in common general use for the Communion office.[6]

[1] This gave occasion to a special pastoral letter of the Bishop of London, Dec. 26, 1718. [2] Whiston's *Memoirs*, at date 1720, 249.

[3] Thus we find Dr. Parr speaking of 'reviving' its use in his parish. Johnstone's 'Life of Parr' -*Q. Rev.* 39, 268. Expressions of dislike to parts of it among Churchmen are very numerous throughout the century.

[4] Barbauld's *Works*, by Aikin, ii. 151. Bishop Watson's *Life*, i. 395.

[5] J. Johnson, *Clergyman's Vade Mecum*, i. 12, and Heylin (*Hist.* pl. ii. cap. 4) quoted by him.

[6] T. Bisse, *Beauty of Holiness*, 123. C. Crutwell's *Life of Bishop*

Bull, Sherlock, Beveridge, and other Anglican divines, who belong more to the seventeenth than to the eighteenth century, had expressed much concern at the unfrequency of celebrations of the Eucharist as compared with a former age. Our Reformers, they said, had regarded it as an ordinary part of Christian worship.[1] In the first Prayer-book of Edward VI. there had been express directions relating to a daily administration, not only in cathedrals, but in parish churches. But now, said Beveridge, people have so departed from primitive usage that they think once a week is too often.[2] It had come to be monthly or perhaps quarterly. The Puritans, with the idea that the solemnity of the rite was enhanced by its recurring after comparatively lengthened intervals, discouraged frequent communions, and many Low Churchmen of the next generation held the same opinion.[3] In the country, quarterly communions had become the general rule. The number of communicants had also very much diminished. No doubt this was owing in great measure to the general laxity which followed upon the Restoration. But the cause already mentioned contributed to keep away even religious people. It must be also remembered that, during the period of the Reformation, and for some time after, stated attendance at the Holy Communion was regarded not only as a religious duty, but as an ordinary sign of membership in the National Church, and of attachment to its principles. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, although the odious sacramental test was yet to survive for many a long year, that feeling had very generally passed away, and was being gradually superseded in many minds by an opposite idea that this Sacrament was not so much a help to Christian living, as a badge, from which many excellent people shrunk, of decided religious profession. With the rise of the religious societies there was a change for the better. The High Church movement of Queen Anne's time, regarded in its worthiest form and among its best representatives, was one in which the sacramental element was prominently marked. If a comparison is made between the number of churches in London where the Sacrament was weekly administered in Queen Anne's reign, and on the other hand, in the period from about the middle of George I.'s reign to the third or fourth decade of the present century, the difference would be strikingly in favour of the

Wilson, 265 (in the Isle of Man, First and Second Services are the regular terms used in official ecclesiastical notices). *London Parishes*, 8.

[1] Sherlock *On Public Worship*, 1681, 205, 219.

[2] Beveridge *On Frequent Communion*, 155, 173.

[3] Fleetwood for example, 'Charge to the Ely Clergy,' 1716—*Works*, 1737, 699.

earlier date. In 1741, we find Secker admonishing the clergy of the diocese of Oxford, that they were bound to administer thrice in the year, that there ought to be an administration during the long interval between Whitsuntide and Christmas. 'And if,' he adds somewhat dubiously, 'you can afterwards advance from a quarterly communion to a monthly one, I make no doubt but you will.'[1] Of course there were many verbal and many practical protests against the prevalent disregard of this central Christian ordinance. Thus both Wesley from a High Church point of view, and the Broad Church author of the 'Free and Candid Disquisitions,' urged the propriety of weekly celebrations. And before the end of the century there was doubtless some improvement. In many parish churches the general custom of a quarterly administration was broken through in favour of a monthly one, and in many cathedrals the Sacrament might once more be received on every Lord's Day.[2] But Bishop Tomline might well feel it a matter for just complaint, that being at St. Paul's on Easter Day, 1800, 'in that vast and noble cathedral no more than six persons were found at the table of the Lord.'[3] Before leaving this part of the subject, it should be added that, previous to the time when the Methodist organisation became unhappily separated from the National Church, the sermons of Wesley and his preachers were sometimes followed by a large accession of communicants at the parish church.[4]

Kneeling to receive the Sacrament had been one of the principal scruples felt by the Presbyterians at the time when the great majority of them were anxious for comprehension within the National Church. Archbishop Tillotson, acting upon his well-known saying, 'Charity is above rubrics,' and in accordance with the practice of some of the Elizabethan divines, was wont to authorise by his example a considerable discretion on this point.[5] Bishop Patrick, on the other hand, though no less earnest in his advocacy of comprehension, did not feel justified in departing from prescribed order, and when Du Moulin desired to receive the Sacrament from him, declined, 'not without many kind remarks,' to administer to him without his kneeling.[6] After all schemes of comprehension had fallen through, the con-

[1] Secker's *Eight Charges*, 63.

[2] E. C. M. Walcott's *Customs of Cathedrals*, 101.

[3] Quoted in *The Church of England Vindicated*, &c., 1801, 5.

[4] *Two Letters Concerning the Methodists*, by the Rev. Moore Booker, 1751, Pref. iv.

[5] Burnet's Funeral Sermon on Tillotson, quoted in Lathbury's *Nonjurors*, 156.

[6] Du Moulin's *Sober and Dispassionate Reply*, &c., 1680, 32.

cession in question became very unfrequent. A pamphleteer of 1709 speaks doubtfully as to whether it still occurred or not.[1] A greater licence in regard of posture was one of the suggestions of the 'Free and Candid Disquisitions.'

Through the Georgian period, a negligent habit was by no means unusual of reading the early part of the Communion service from the reading desk. Dr. Parr, in 1785, speaking of the changes he had introduced into his church at Hatton, evidently thought himself very correct in 'Communion service at the altar.'[2]

Even in Bishop Bull's time the offertory was very much neglected in country places.[3] Later in the century its disuse became more general. There were one or two parishes in his diocese, Secker said, where the old custom was retained of oblations for the support of the church and alms for the poor. But often there was no offertory at all: he hoped it might be revived and duly administered.[4]

Some remarks have already been made upon the traces which were to be found in a few exceptional instances, during the eighteenth century, of the Eucharistic vestments as appointed in Edward VI.'s Prayer-book.

The sacramental 'usages,' so called, belong to the history of the Nonjurors rather than to that of the National Church. There was, however, no time when the theological and ecclesiastical opinions prevalent among the Nonjurors did not find favour among a few English Conformists, lay and clerical. Thus, the mixture of water with the wine, in conformity with Eastern practice, and in remembrance of the water and the blood, seems to have been occasionally found in parish churches. Hickes said he had found it to be the custom at Barking.[5] Wesley also, and the early Oxford Methodists, approved of it.[6]

In the early part of the seventeenth century George Herbert had said that the country parson must see that on great festivals

[1] *The Church of England's Complaint against the Irregularities of some of the Clergy*, 1709, 15.

[2] J. Johnstone's *Life of Dr. Parr*, qu. in *Q. Rev.* 39, 268.

[3] R. Nelson's *Life of Bull*, 52.

[4] Charge of 1741—Secker's *Eight Charges*, 63.

[5] C. Leslie's 'Letter about the New Separation'—*Works*, i. 510. He adds that some clergymen of the Ch. of E. always used unleavened bread at the Sacrament.

[6] L. Tyerman's *Oxford Methodists*, Pref. vi. Other allusions to an occasional preference for this usage occur in Bishop Horne's *Works*, App. 203, and *Gent. Mag.* 1750, xx. 75. In some editions of Bishop Wilson's *Sacra Privata*, there is a prayer for a blessing on the bread and wine-and-water.

his Church was 'perfumed with incense,' and 'stuck with boughs.'[1] Even as late as George III.'s reign it appears that incense was not quite unknown in the English Church. We are told that on the principal holy days it used to be the 'constant practice at Ely to burn incense on the altar at the Cathedral, till Thomas Green, one of the prebendaries, and now (1779) Dean of Salisbury, a finical man, who is always taking snuff, objected to it, under pretence that it made his head to ache.'[2]

The bad case into which Church music had fallen was much owing to those worthy men, the Parish Clerks. These officials were a great institution in the English Church of the last century. The Parish Clerks of London, from whom all their brethren in the country borrowed some degree of lustre, were an ancient and honourable company. They had been incorporated by Henry III. as 'The Brotherhood of St. Nicolas.' Their Charter had been renewed by Charles I., who conferred upon them additional privileges and immunities, under the name of 'The Warden and Fellowship of Parish Clerks of the City and Suburbs of London and the Liberties thereof, the City of Westminster, the Borough of Southwark, and the fifteen Parishes adjacent.'[3] They had a Hall of their own in Bishopsgate Street; at St. Alban's Church they had their anniversary sermon; at St. Bridget's they had maintained, until about the end of the seventeenth century, a 'music-sermon' on St. Cecilia's day;[4] and Clerkenwell derives its name from the solemn Mystery Plays which their guild in old days used to celebrate near the holy spring.[5] There were certain taverns about the Exchange where they met as a kind of Club, 'men with grave countenances, short wigs, black clothes or dark camlet trimmed with black.'[6] In pre-Reformation days they had ranked among the minor orders of the Church as assistants of the Priests;[7] and so, especially in country churches, they might consider themselves as holding a position somewhat analogous, though on a humbler scale, to that of Precentors. In 1722 a clergyman, writing to the Bishop of London on the subject of the poverty and distressed condition of some of the poorer curates, spoke of the desirability of again admitting men in holy orders to be Parish Clerks. Early in the present century Hartley Coleridge made a somewhat similar suggestion. 'How often in town and country do we hear our divine Liturgy rendered wholly ludicrous by all imaginable tones, twangs, drawls, mouthings, wheezings, gruntings, snuffles

[1] Herbert's *Country Parson* quoted in Brand's *Pop. Antiquities*, i. 521.
[2] Walcott's *Customs of Cathedrals*, 137. [3] *London Parishes*, &c., 20.
[4] Paterson's *Pietas Londinensis*, 52. [5] Id. 104.
[6] *Spectator*, No. 372. [7] H. W. Cripps's *Law of the Ch.*, &c., 218.

and quidrollings, by all diversities of dialect, cacologies and cacophonies, by twistings, contortions and consolidations of visage, squintings and blinkings and upcastings of eyes. . . . Then, too, the discretion assumed by these Hogarthic studies of selecting the tune and verses to be sung makes the psalmody, instead of an integral and affecting portion of the service, as distracting and irrational an episode as the jigs and country dances scraped between the acts of a tragedy.'[1] There would be no difficulty, he thought, in getting educated persons to discharge the office for little remuneration or none, if it were not for the troublesome and often disagreeable parish business annexed to the office. As it was, the Clerk occupied a very odd position, uniting the menial duties of a useful Church servant to other functions, the decent performance of which was utterly beyond the range of an illiterate man. Many of our readers may be acquainted with the witty satire in which, with a perpetual side glance at the fussy self-importance visible in Bishop Burnet's History, Pope writes 'the Memoirs of P. P., Clerk of this Parish.' With what delightful complacency this diligent representative of his class speaks of taking rank among 'men right worthy of their calling, of a clear and sweet voice, and of becoming gravity'—of his place in the congregation at the feet of the Priest, of his raising the Psalm,—of his arraying the ministers with the surplice,—of his responsible part in the service of the Church! 'Remember, Paul, I said to myself, thou standest before men of high worship, the wise Mr. Justice Freeman, the grave Mr. Justice Tonson, the good Lady Jones, and the two virtuous gentlewomen her daughters, nay the great Sir Thomas Truby, knight and baronet, and my young master the Squire who shall one day be lord of this manor.' With what magisterial gravity he descants of whipping out the dogs, 'except the sober lap dog of the good widow Howard,'—tearing away the children's half-eaten apples, smoothing the dog's ears of the great Bible! How he prides himself in sweeping and trimming weekly the pews and benches, which were formerly swept but once in three years,—in having the surplice darned, washed and laid up in fresh lavender, better than any other parish,—in having discovered a thief with a Bible and key—in his love of ringing,—in his tutoring young men and maidens to tune their voice as it were with a psaltery,—in being invited to the banquets of the Church officers,—in the hints he has given to young clergymen,—in his loyal attachment to the interests of 'our High Church.'[2] Such was the Parish Clerk of the eighteenth

[1] Hartley Coleridge, *Essays and Marginalia*, ii. 338.

[2] Pope's *Works*, vii. 222–35. Naturally, Jacobite parsons were robed by

century, the personage upon whom the charge of the musical part of the service mainly devolved,—whose duty it was to give out [1] the Psalm, to lead it,[2] very commonly to read it out line by line,[3] and frequently to select what was to be sung. No wonder, Secker, speaking of Church psalmody, requested his clergy to take great care how they chose their clerks.[4] And no wonder, it may be added, that Church psalmody, under such conditions, fell into a state which was a reproach to the Church that could tolerate it.

In the first years of the eighteenth century there were still occasional discussions whether organs were to be considered superstitious and Popish.[5] They had been destroyed or silenced in the time of the Commonwealth ; and it was not without much misgiving on the part of timid Protestants that after the Restoration one London church after another [6] admitted the suspected instruments. An organ which was set up at Tiverton in 1696 gave rise to much dispute, and was the occasion of Dodwell writing on 'The lawfulness of instrumental music in holy offices.'[7] A pamphleteer in 1699, who signs himself N. N., quoted Isidore, Wicliffe, and Erasmus against the use of musical instruments in public worship.[8] Scotch Presbyterians and English Dissenters entirely abjured them, till Rowland Hill, near the end of the century, erected one in the Surrey Chapel.[9] It was noted

Jacobite clerks. 'Who hath not observed several parish clerks that have ransacked Hopkins and Sternhold for staves in favour of the race of Jacob.'—Addison, in *The Freeholder*, No. 53.

[1] John Wesley (*Works*, x. 445), records an amusing reminiscence of his boyhood: 'One Sunday, immediately after sermon, my father's clerk said with an audible voice: "Let us sing to the praise, &c., an hymn of my own composing:

King William is come home, come home !
King William home is come !
Therefore let us together sing
The hymn that's called Te D'um."'

[2] Singing the first line, in order to put the congregation in tune.'—*Spectator*, No. 284. 'The clerk ordered to sing a Psalm, and so keep the congregation together, while Mr. Claxton was away.'—Thoresby's *Diary*, April 4, 1713.

[3] Bishop Gibson specially directed the clergy to instruct their clerks to do this. Charge of 1721, Gibson's *Charges*, 1744, 18.

[4] Secker's *Charges*, 65. At St. Lawrence Pountney, the candidates for the office had to 'take the desk' on trial on successive Sundays.—H. B. Wilson, *Hist. of St. Lawr. P.*, 160.

[5] *Somers Tracts*, xii. 161. *The Scourge*, p. 123.

[6] Paterson's *Pietas Lond., passim.*

[7] Brokesby's *Life of Dodwell*, 359, 369.

[8] *A Discourse concerning the Rise, &c., of Cathedral Worship*, 1699.

[9] V. R. Charlesworth's *Life of Rowland Hill*, 156.

on the other hand, as one of the signs of High Church reaction in Queen Anne's time, that churches without organs had thinner congregations.[1]

It is perhaps not too much to say, that through a great part of the eighteenth century chanting was almost unknown in parish churches, and was regarded as distinctively belonging to 'Cathedral worship.' Watts, who, although a Nonconformist, was well acquainted with a great number of Churchmen, and was likely to be well informed on any question of psalmody, remarked, in somewhat quaint language, that 'the congregation of choristers in cathedral churches are the only Levites that sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David and Asaph the seer.'[2]

Even in Cathedrals musical services were looked upon with great disfavour by many, and by many others with a bare tolerance nearly allied to disapproval. Could the question of their continuance have been put to popular vote they might probably have been maintained by a small majority as being conformable to old custom, but without appreciation, and with an implied understanding that they were wholly exceptional. The Commissioners of King William's time had suggested that the chanting of divine service in cathedrals should be laid aside;[3] and even Archbishop Sharp, although in many respects a High Churchman, told Thoresby that he did not much approve of singing the prayers, 'but it having been the custom of all cathedrals since the Reformation, it is not to be altered without a law.'[4] Exaggerated dread of Popery suspected latent evils, it scarcely knew what, lurking in this kind of worship. Perhaps, too, it was thought to border upon 'enthusiasm,' that other religious bugbear of the age. A paper in the 'Tatler' speaks of it not with disapproval, but with something of condescension to weaker minds, as 'the rapturous way of devotion.'[5] In fact, cathedrals in general were almost unintelligible to the prevalent sentiment of the eighteenth century. Towards the end of the period a spirit of appreciation grew up, which Malcolm speaks of as being in marked contrast with the contemptuous indifference of a former date.[6] They were regarded, no doubt, with a certain pride as splendid national memorials of a kind of devotion that had long passed away. Some young friends of David Hume, who had

[1] Bishop Kennet's *Life*, 1730, 126.
[2] J. Watts's 'Essay on Psalmody'—*Works*, ix. 8.
[3] Teale's *Lives of Eminent E. Laymen*, 260.
[4] R. Thoresby's *Diary*, March 16, 1697.
[5] *Tatler*, No. 198.
[6] J. P. Malcolm, *Manners, &c., of London*, i. 230

been to service at St. Paul's and found scarcely anybody there, began to speak of the folly of lavishing money on such useless structures. The famous sceptic gently rebuked them for talking without judgment. 'St. Paul's,' he said, 'as a monument of the religious feeling and taste of the country, does it honour and will endure. We have wasted millions upon a single campaign in Flanders, and without any good resulting from it.'[1] There was no fanatic dislike to cathedrals, as when Lord Brooke had hoped that he might see the day when not one stone of St. Paul's should be left upon another.[2] They were simply neglected, as if both they and those who yet loved the mode of worship perpetuated in them belonged to a bygone generation. In the North this was not so much the case. Durham Cathedral especially seems to have retained, in a greater degree than any other, not only the grandeur and hospitality of an older period, but also the affections of the townsmen around it. Defoe, in 1728, found a congregation of 500 people at the six-o'clock morning service.[3] In most cases, even on Sundays, the attendance was miserably thin. Doubtless, many individual members of cathedral chapters loved the noble edifice and its solemn services with a very profound attachment; but, as a general rule, they belonged to the past and to the future far more than to the present. The only mode of utilising cathedrals which seems to have been thoroughly to the taste of the last century was the converting them into music-halls for oratorios. Early in the century we find Dean Swift at Dublin consenting—not, however, without much demur—to 'lend his cathedral to players and scrapers,' to act what he called their opera.[4] Next, in St. Paul's, at the annual anniversary of the Sons of the Clergy, sober Churchmen saw with disgust a careless, pleasure-loving audience listening to singers promiscuously gathered from the theatres, and laughing, and eating, and drinking their wine in the intervals of the performance.[5] Then came the festivals of the Three Choirs at Worcester, Gloucester, and Hereford, very open to objection at a time when the managers thought of little but how to achieve for their undertaking popularity and pecuniary success. Sublime as is the music of 'The Messiah,' it was not often performed in the last century without circumstances which jarred strongly against the devotional feeling of a deeply religious man like John Newton,

[1] Caldwell Papers, quoted in *Q. Rev.* 97, 404.

[2] Laud's *Hist. of his Troubles*, 201, quoted in Southey's *Book of the Church*, 472.

[3] Walcott's *Cathedrals*, 101.

[4] Dr. Swift, *To Himself on St. Cecilia's Day*. Anderson's *B. Poets*, ix. 107.

[5] Malcolm's *London*, i. 267.

and led him to what might otherwise seem a most unreasonable hatred of oratorios.[1]

In Queen Anne's time, there was often no part of the Church service in which the High or Low Church tone of the congregation was more closely betokened than when the preacher had just entered the pulpit. In the one case, the Bidding Prayer was said; in the other, there was an extempore prayer, often of considerable length, commonly called the pulpit prayer. The Bidding Prayer had its origin in pre-Reformation times. 'The way was first for the preacher to name and open his text, and then to call on the people to go to their prayers, and to tell them what they were to pray for; after which all the people said their beads in a general silence, and the preacher also kneeled down and said his.'[2] It was thus not a prayer, but an exhortation to prayer, and instruction in the points commended to private but united worship. In Henry VIII.'s time the Pope's name was omitted, and prayer for the King under his proper titles strictly enjoined. In Elizabeth's reign, praise for all who had departed in God's faith was substituted for prayer in their behalf.[3] By the existing Canons, as agreed upon in 1603, preachers were instructed to move the people to join with them in prayer before the sermon either in the Bidding form, 'or to that effect as briefly as conveniently they may.'[4] It was, however, no longer clear whether it were itself a prayer, or, as in former time, an admonition to pray. On the one hand, it was called 'a form of prayer,' and was followed without a pause by the Lord's Prayer, and then by the sermon. On the other hand, it was prefaced not by the familiar 'Let us pray,' but by the old bidding, 'Ye shall pray,' or 'Pray ye,' and the congregation stood as listeners until the Lord's Prayer began.[5] Hence a difference in practice arose, curiously characteristic of the controversies, ecclesiastical and political, which were being agitated at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century. In Charles I.'s reign, many of the clergy had chosen to consider it a prayer, and taking advantage of the permission to vary it, had converted it into one of those extempore effusions which Puritan feeling considered so peculiarly edifying.[6] It need hardly be added that the Anglican party were more than ever careful to adhere to the older usage. After the Restoration, the Bidding

[1] J. Newton's *Sermons on the Messiah*, 1784–5.

[2] Burnet's *Hist. of the Ref.*, quoted in S. Hilliard's *Obligation of the Clergy to keep strictly to the Bidding form*, 1715, 8.

[3] Wheatley's *B. of Common Prayer*, 1860, 171.

[4] Canon 55.

[5] Bisse's *Beauty of Holiness*, 1721, 154.

[6] Hilliard's *Obligations, &c.*, 19.

Prayer was for a time not very much used, and the pulpit prayer, as adopted by Low Churchmen from Puritans and Presbyterians, began in many places to assume a most prominent position. 'Some men,' Sherlock said, in 1681, 'think they worship God sufficiently if they come time enough to church to join in the pulpit prayer.'[1] High Churchmen could not endure it. 'It is a long, crude, extemporary prayer,' said South, 'in reproach of all the prayers which the Church, with such an admirable prudence and devotion, has been making before.'[2] The use, however, of extempore prayer in this part of the service was defended by some of the clergy and bishops, as agreeable to the people, as conformable to the custom of the Reformed Churches abroad,[3] and attractive to those among the Presbyterians and other denominations who only needed encouragement and a few slight concessions to exchange occasional for constant conformity. Meanwhile, at the end of the preceding century, 'the Bidding' had been more generally revived. Archbishop Tenison, in a circular to the clergy in 1695, had called attention to the neglect of it,[4] and the Bishop of London revived its general use in his own diocese, to the astonishment, says Fleetwood, of many congregations who stared and stood amazed at 'Ye shall pray.'[5] In Queen Anne's time it became very general,[6] being quite in accord with the High Church sentiment which had then strongly set in. A political bias also was suspected. Not, perhaps, without reason; for it was a time when political prepossessions which could not openly be declared found vent in all kinds of byways. After the Revolution, while the title of the new sovereign was not yet secure, the Clergy were specially enjoined, that however else they might vary their prayer or exhortation to prayer before the sermon, they were in any case to mention the King by name. It was said—whether in sarcasm or as a grave reality—that the semi-Jacobite parsons, of whom there were many, found satisfaction in discovering a mode by which they could 'show at once their duty and their disgust'[7] in a manner unexceptionally accordant with the law and with the Canon. 'Ye are bidden to pray,' or, as a certain Dr. M—— always worded it, 'Ye must

[1] Sherlock *On Public Worship*, 1681, 188.

[2] South's *Works*, iv. 180. He elsewhere calls it 'a long, crude, impertinent, upstart harangue.' So also *Complaint of the Ch. of E.*, 1709, 19, and Thoresby's *Diary*, June 14, 1714. *The Royal Guard*, &c., 1684, 49.

[3] J. Bingham's *French Church's Apology for the Ch. of E.*—*Works*, ix. 106.

[4] Stoughton's *Church of the Revolution*, 205.

[5] Fleetwood's *Defence of Praying before Sermon*, 1720—*Works*, 738.

[6] G. G. Perry's *Hist. of the Ch.*, 3, 228.

[7] *The Justice and Necessity of restraining the Clergy*, &c., 1715, 64.

pray,'[1] did not necessarily imply much heart in fulfilling the injunction by which the people were called upon to pray for their new lords. But, curiously enough, when George I. came to the throne, the political gloss attached to 'the Bidding' became reversed. In the royal directions to the archbishops, the canonical form, with the royal titles included, was strictly enjoined;[2] and consequently not those who used, but those who neglected it, ran a risk of being set down as having Jacobite proclivities. It had, however, never been really popular, and few objected to its gradual disuse. Ever since the Revolution, it had introduced into a portion of the public worship far too decided an element of political feeling. The objection was the greater, because the liberty of variation had given it a certain personal character. If the preacher did not keep strictly to the words of the Canon, he could scarcely avoid making it appear, by the names omitted or inserted, what might be his political, his ecclesiastical, or his academical opinions. Those, again, whose respect for dignities was in excess—a foible to which the age was prone—would go through a list of titles, illustrious, right reverend, and right honourable,[3] which ill accorded with a time of prayer. Before the middle of the century, except in university churches or on formal occasions, the Canon became generally obsolete, and the sermon was prefaced, as often in our own day, by a Collect and the Lord's Prayer.

At the opening of the eighteenth century the pulpit was no longer the power it had been in past days. It had been the strongest support of the Reformation; and monarchs and statesmen had known well how immense was its influence in informing and guiding the popular mind on all questions which bore upon religion or Church politics. In proportion, however, as the agency of the press had been developed, the preachers had lost more and more of their old monopoly. Numberless essays and pamphlets appeared, reflecting all shades of educated opinion, with much to say on questions of social morality and the duties of Churchmen and citizens. They did not by any means interfere with the primary office of the sermon. They were calculated rather to do preaching a good service. When other means of instruction are wanting, the preacher may feel himself bound to include a wide range of subjects. When the press comes to his aid, and relieves him for the most part of the more secular of his topics, he is the more at liberty to confine himself to matters which have a primary and direct bearing upon the spiritual life.

[1] *The Justice and Necessity of Restraining the Clergy*, &c., 1715, 64.
[2] *Direction to our Archbishops*, &c., Dec. 11, 1714, § vi.
[3] *Spectator*, No. 312

In any case, however, whether the change be, on the whole, beneficial or not to the general character of preaching, it must evidently deprive it of some part of its former influence.

Yet in the reigns of William and Queen Anne good preaching was still highly appreciated and very popular. Jablouski said of his Protestant fellow-countrymen in Prussia, that the sermon had come to be considered so entirely the important part of the service that people commonly said, 'Will you go to sermon?' instead of 'to church.'[1] It was not quite so in England; yet undoubtedly there was very generally something of the same feeling. 'Many,' said Sherlock, 'who have little other religion, are forward enough to hear sermons, and many will miss the prayers and come in only in time to hear the preaching.'[2] If some of the incentives to good preaching, and some of the attributes which had distinguished it, were no longer conspicuous, other causes had come in to maintain the honour of the pulpit. That stir and movement of the intellectual faculty which was everywhere beginning to test the power of reason on all questions of theology and faith had both brought into existence a new style of preaching, and had secured for it a number of attentive hearers. The anxious and earnest, but, notwithstanding its occasional virulence, the somewhat unimpassioned controversy with Rome, and the newly aroused hopes of reconciling the moderate Dissenters, had tended to a similar result. A rich, imaginative eloquence, though it could not fail to have admirers, was out of favour, not only with those who considered Tillotson the model preacher, but also with High Churchmen. Jeremy Taylor would hardly have ranked high in Bishop Bull's estimation. His wit and metaphors, and 'tuneful pointed sentences,' would almost certainly have been adjudged by the good Bishop of St. David's unworthy of the grave and solemn dignity of the pulpit.[3] And brilliant as were the sallies of Dr. South's vigorous and highly seasoned declamations, they were rarely of a kind to kindle imagination and stir emotion. The edge of his arguments was keen and cold; and they were addressed to the common reason of his hearers, no less than those of the 'Latitudinarian' Churchmen with whom he most delighted to contend.

That degradation of religion, which, even in the earlier years of the century, was beginning to lower the Gospel of redemption into a philosophy of morality, has been already alluded to.

[1] Jablouski's Correspondence, in *Archbishop Sharp's Life*, by his Son, ii. 157, App. 2, 3.

[2] Sherlock, *On Rel. Worship*, 66.

[3] Nelson's *Life of Bull*, 420.

Under its depressing influence, preaching sank to a very low ebb. Hurd, in 1761, said, with perfect truth, that 'the common way of sermonising had become most wretched, and even the best models very defective.'[1] By that date, however, improvement had already begun. It was sometimes said, and the assertion was not altogether unfounded, that these cold pulpit moralities were in a great measure the recoil from Methodist extravagances. But far more generally, as the century advanced, Methodism promoted the beneficial change which had already been noted in the case of Secker. The more zealous and observant of the Clergy could not fail to learn a valuable lesson from the wonderful power over the souls of men which their Methodist fellow-workmen—the irregulars of the Church—had acquired. And independently of their example, the same leaven was working among those sharers in the Evangelical revival who remained steadfast to the established order, as among those who felt themselves cramped by it. Whatever in other respects might be their faults of style and matter, they were, at all events, in no point what some sermons were called—'Stoical Essays,' 'imitations from a Christian pulpit of Seneca and Epictetus.'[2] There were many mannerisms, and there was much want of breadth of thought, but in heart and purpose it was a true preaching of the Gospel.

Even towards the end of the century there were a few notable instances of the power which a great preacher might yet command. We are told of Dean Kirwan, who had left the Roman for the English Church, that even in times of public calamity and distress, his irresistible powers of persuasion repeatedly produced contributions exceeding a thousand or twelve hundred pounds at a sermon; and his hearers, not content with emptying their purses into the plate, sometimes threw in jewels or watches in earnest of further benefactions.[3] A sermon of Bishop Horsley once produced an effect which would hardly be possible except under circumstances of great public excitement. When he preached in Westminster Abbey, before the House of Lords, on January 30, 1793, the whole assembly, stirred by his peroration, rose with one impulse, and remained standing till the sermon ended.[4]

Amid the excited and angry controversies which occupied the earlier years of the century, the pulpit did not by any means

[1] Warburton and Hurd's *Correspondence*, 31.
[2] Horsley's *Charges*, 6; *Reflection on the Clergy*, &c., 1798, 42.
[3] Pref. to W. B. Kirwan's *Sermons*, quoted in *Q. Rev.*, xi. 133.
[4] A. P. Stanley's *Hist. Mem. of Westminster Abbey*, 535.

retain a befitting calm. Later in the century there was no great cause for complaint on this ground.

Whiston says that he sometimes read in church one of the Homilies. So, no doubt, did others. But even in 1691 we find it mentioned that they could not be much used without scandal, as if they were read from laziness. 'The more the pity,' says the writer in question, 'for they are good preaching.'[1] It was one of Tillotson's ideas to get a new set of Homilies written, as a supplement to the existing ones. There was to be one for each Sunday and principal holy day in the year; and the whole was to constitute a semi-authorised corpus of doctrinal and practical divinity adapted for general instruction and family reading. Burnet, Lloyd, and Patrick joined in the scheme, and some progress was made in carrying it out. It met, however, with opposition, and was ultimately laid aside.[2]

To nearly every one of the London churches in Queen Anne's time a Lecturer was attached, independent in most cases of the incumbent.[3] A great many of these foundations were an inheritance from Puritan times. The duty required being only that of preaching, men had been able to take a Lectureship who disapproved of various particulars in the order and government of the Established Church, and would not have entered themselves in the list of her regular ministers.[4] There had been some advantage and some evil in this. It had enlarged to some extent the action of the Church, and provided within its limits a field of activity for men whose preaching was acceptable to a great number of Churchmen, but who hovered upon the borders of Nonconformity. Only it secured this advantage in a makeshift and scarcely authorised manner, and at the risk of introducing into parishes a source of disunion which was justly open to complaint. Lecturers were added to the Church system in towns without being incorporated into it. Room should have been found for them, without permanently attaching to a parish church a preacher whose views might be continually discordant with those of the incumbent and his curates. Under the circumstances, it was perhaps no more than a prudent requirement of the Act of Uniformity, that Lecturers should duly sign the Articles and before their first lecture read the Prayers, and make the same declarations as were obligatory upon other clergymen. They retained, however, something of the distinctive character which had marked them hitherto. Generally, they were decided

[1] *Officium Cleri*, 1691, 31. [2] Birch's *Life of Tillotson*, cclv.
[3] Paterson's *Pietas Londinensis*.
[4] *The Church of England's Complaint*, &c., 1709, 21-2. *The Scourge*, No. 10, 1717. Polwhele's Preface to Lavington, 220.

Low Churchmen: the more so as lectureships were very commonly in the choice of the people, and the bulk of the electors were just that class of tradesmen in whom the Puritan, and afterwards the so-called Presbyterian, party in the Church had found its strongest support. For a like reason they were sometimes, no doubt, too much addicted to those arts by which the popular ear is won and retained, and which were particularly offensive to men whose most characteristic merits and faults were those of a different system. Bishop Newton said that lectureships were often disagreeable preferments, as subject to so many humours and caprices.[1] On the other hand, the principal Lecturers in London held a position which able men might well be ambitious of holding. Nor was the long list of eminent men who had held London lectureships composed by any means exclusively of the leaders of one section of the English Church. If it contained the names of Tillotson, and Burnet, and Fleetwood, and Blackhall, and Willis, and Hoadly, and Herring, it contained also those of Sharp and Atterbury, of Stanhope, Bennet, Moss, and Marshall. The Lecture of St. Lawrence Jewry was conspicuously high in repute. 'Though but moderately endowed in point of profit, it was long considered as the post of honour. It had been possessed by a remarkable succession of the most able and celebrated preachers, of whom were the Archbishops Tillotson and Sharp; and it was usually attended by a variety of persons of the first note and eminence, particularly by numbers of the clergy, not only of the younger sort, but several also of long standing and established character.'[2] On Friday evenings it was in fact described as being 'not so much a concourse of people, but a convocation of divines.'[3] The suburbs, too, of London had their Lecturers, supported by voluntary contributions, 'the amount of which put to shame the scanty stipends of the curates.'[4] At the end of the period the Lecturers kept their place, but in diminished numbers;[5] their relative importance being the more dimmed by the increase in number of the parochial clergy, and by the migration from the old city churches to new ones in the suburbs and chapels of ease where no such foundations existed.

It is almost sad to note in Paterson's 'Pietas Londinensis' the number of commemorative sermons founded in London

[1] Bishop Newton's *Life and Works*, i. 85.
[2] J. Nichols' *Literary Anecd. of Eighteenth Cent.* iv. 152.
[3] *Archbishop Sharp's Life*, by his Son, i. 31.
[4] *Hardships of the Inferior Clergy in and about London*, &c., 1722, 85.
[5] *London Parishes*, &c.

parishes under the vain hope of perpetuating a name for ever. At that time, however, 'all these lectures were constantly observed on their appointed days.'[1] Funeral sermons had for some time been flourishing far too vigorously. Bossuet and Massillon have left magnificent examples of the noble pulpit oratory to which such occasions may give rise. But in England, funeral sermons were too often a reproach to the clergy who could preach them, and to the public opinion which encouraged them. Just in the same way as a book could scarcely be published without a dedication which, it might be thought, would bring only ridicule upon the personage extravagantly belauded in it, so it was with these funeral sermons. A good man like Kettlewell might well be 'scandalised with such fulsome panegyrics; it grieved him to the soul to see flattery taken sanctuary in the pulpit.'[2] They had become an odious system, an ordinary funeral luxury, often handsomely paid for, which even the poor were ambitious to purchase.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century baptisms during time of public service were decidedly unfrequent. There had been at one time such great and widely-spread scruples at the sign of the cross and the use of sponsors, that many people had preferred, where they found it possible, to get their children baptized at home, that these adjuncts of the rite might be dispensed with. During the Commonwealth, so long as the public ceremonial of the Church of England was prohibited, private baptism had become a custom even among those churchmen who were most attached to the Anglican ritual. Such, thought Sherlock, were the principal causes of a neglect which seems to have become in his time almost universal.[3] Often the form for public baptism was used on such occasions. But this irregularity was not the worst. There can be no doubt that these 'home christenings' had got to be very commonly looked upon as little more than an idle ceremony, and an occasion for jollity and tippling. This flagrant abuse could not fail to shock the minds of earnest men. We find Sherlock,[4] Bull,[5] Atterbury,[6] Stanhope,[7] Berriman,[8] Secker,[9] and a number of other Churchmen, using their best endeavours to bring about a more seemly reverence for the holy ordinance.

The taking of fees for baptism was a scandal not to be excused

[1] Paterson's *Pict. Lond.* 49, 50.
[2] Teale's *Lives*, 253. So also *Complaint of the Ch. of E.* 1709, 23.
[3] Sherlock *On Public Worship*, pt. ii. ch. 4. [4] Id.
[5] Nelson's *Life of Bull*, 39, 366.
[6] F. Williams' *Memoirs of Atterbury*, i. 266.
[7] Nichols' *Lit. An.* iv. 169.
[8] J. Wilson's *Hist. of Merch. Taylors*, 1075.
[9] Secker's *Eight Charges*, 254.

on any ground of prescription. This appears to have been not very unusual, and to have been done without shame and without rebuke.[1] Probably it chiefly grew out of the above-mentioned habit of having this sacrament celebrated privately in houses.

Early in the century the sign of the cross in baptism was still looked upon by many with great suspicion. Even in 1773 Dean Tucker speaks of it[2] as one of the two principal charges—the other being that of kneeling at the Eucharist—made by Dissenters against the established ritual. Objections to the use of sponsors were not so often heard. They would have been fewer still if there had been many Robert Nelsons. His letters to his godson, a young man just setting out to a merchant's office in Smyrna,[3] are models of sound advice given by a wise, Christian-hearted man of the world. Wesley thought the office a good and expedient one; but regretted, as many other Churchmen before and since have done, the form in which some of the questions are put.[4]

In the latter part of the seventeenth and through the earlier years of the eighteenth century, we find earnest Churchmen of all opinions sorely lamenting the comparative disuse of the old custom of catechizing on Sunday afternoons. Five successive archbishops of Canterbury—Sheldon, Sancroft, Tillotson, Tenison, and Wake—however widely their opinions might differ on some points relating to the edification of the Church, were cordially agreed in this.[5] Sherlock, Kettlewell, Bull, Beveridge, Sharp, Fleetwood may be mentioned as others who, both by precept and example, insisted upon its importance. After Bishop Frampton's inability to take the oaths had caused his deprivation, the one public ministerial act in which he delighted to take part was to gather the children about him during the afternoon service, and catechize them, and expound to them the sermon they had heard.[6] It seemed to them all that no preaching could take the place of catechizing as a means of bringing home to the young and scantily educated the doctrines of the Christian faith and the practical duties of religion, and that it was also eminently adapted to create an intelligent attachment to the Church in which they had been brought up. Such arguments had, of course, all the greater weight at a time when elementary schools were as yet so far

[1] Gilbert Wakefield's *Memoirs*, 282; *Miseries of the Inferior Clergy*, &c., 1722, 18.

[2] Dean Tucker's *Works*, 1772; *Letter to Dr. Kippis*, 23; *Works*, vol. i.

[3] Secretan's *Life of Nelson*.

[4] Wesley's *Works*, x. 507–9.

[5] J. Nichols' *Lit. Anecd.* i. 475; Tillotson's *Works*, iii. 514–16.

[6] Lathbury's *Hist. of the Nonjurors*, 203.

from general, and the art of reading was still, comparatively speaking, the accomplishment of a few.

A vigorous but not very effectual attempt was made by many bishops and clergymen to enforce the canon which required servants and apprentices, as well as children, to attend the catechizing. Bull, for example, and Fleetwood, not only urged it as a duty, but charged the churchwardens of their dioceses to present for ecclesiastical rebuke or penalty all who refused to comply.[1] In the Isle of Man the commanding personal influence of Bishop Wilson succeeded in carrying the system out. But elsewhere pastoral monitions and ecclesiastical menaces were generally unavailing to overcome the repugnance which people who were no longer children felt to the idea of submitting themselves to public questioning.[2] Bishop Bull, at Brecknock, practically confessed the futility of the effort by giving a dole of twelvepence a week to old people of that town on condition of their submitting to the ordeal.

Richard Baxter, in the seventeenth century, had said of confirmation that, so far from scrupling the true use of it, there was scarce any outward thing in the Church he valued more highly. But he liked not, he added, the English way. Dioceses were so vast that a bishop could not perform this and other offices for a hundredth part of his flock. Not one in a hundred was confirmed at all ; and often the sacred rite wore the appearance of 'a running ceremony' and 'a game for boys.'[3] Half a century later, in 1747, we find exactly the same reproach in Whiston's 'Memoirs.' 'Confirmation,' he said, 'is, I doubt, much oftener omitted than performed. And it is usually done in the Church of England in such a hurry and disorder, that it hardly deserves the name of a sacred ordinance of Christianity.'[4] Fifty years again after this a clergyman, speaking of the great use of confirmation fitly prepared for and duly solemnised, describes it as being very constantly nothing better than 'a holiday ramble.'[5] If, as Secker in one of his Charges said, the esteem of it was generally preserved in England,[6] it certainly retained that respect in spite of circumstances which must inevitably have tended to bring it into disregard and contempt. But there was

[1] Nelson's *Life of Bull*, 359 ; Fleetwood's *Works*, 472.

[2] Sherlock *On Public Worship*, 204 ; *Life of Kettlewell*, 91 ; Secker's *Charges*, 53.

[3] Baxter's *English Nonconformity*, chap. 19, quoted in J. Bingham's *Works*, 'Objection of Dissenters Considered,' b. iii. ch. 21.

[4] Whiston's *Memoirs*, 469.

[5] *The Church of England Vindicated*, &c., 1801, 15.

[6] Secker's Charge of 1741.

generally one preservative at least to keep the rite from degenerating into a mere unedifying ceremony. There was no period in the last century when the office and person of a bishop was not looked upon with a good deal of reverence among the people generally ; nor is there any part of a bishop's office in which he speaks with so much weight of fatherly authority as when he confirms the young. And, besides, it would be very erroneous to suppose that there were not many bishops and many clergymen who did their utmost to make the rite an impressive reality.

That abominable system of clandestine marriages which reached its acme in the neighbourhood of the Debtors' Prison in the Fleet, has been made mention of by many writers.[1] Apart from these glaring scandals there had been up to that date much irregularity in marriages. Banns were an established ordinance ; but notwithstanding the remonstrances of some of the clergy, who urged, like Parson Adams, that the Church had prescribed a form with which all Christians ought to comply,[2] they were, as Walpole says, 'totally in disuse, except among the inferior people.'[3] Licences were obtained too easily,[4] and not sufficiently insisted upon, and evening marriages were by no means unknown.[5] After 1753 these abuses ceased. But most readers will remember that until a very recent date Church feeling had not restored to their proper honour the publication of banns. They were thought somewhat plebeian ; and the high-fashionable and aristocratic method was to celebrate a marriage by special licence in a drawing-room, and with curtailed service.[6]

The costly but ugly and unmeaning appurtenances which a simpler taste will soon, it is to be hoped, banish from our funerals, were customary long before the eighteenth century began. In George III.'s reign a prodigal expenditure on such occasions began to be thought less essential. Before that time the relatives of the deceased were generally anxious that the obsequies should be as pompous as their means would possibly allow. It was still much as it had been in the days of Charles II., when 'it was ordinarily remarked that it cost a private gentleman of small estate more to bury his wife than to endow his daughter for marriage to a rich man.'[7] The bodies of 'persons of con-

[1] Lord Mahon's *History*, chap. 31 ; C. Knight's *Old England* ; A. Andrews' *Eighteenth Century*, chaps. 3 and 4 ; Malcolm's *Manners and Customs of London*, ii. 272.

[2] Fielding's *Thomas Andrews*, b. ii. ch. 13.

[3] H. Walpole's *Memoirs of George II.* 342.

[4] Fleetwood's *Works*, 469 ; *Archbishop Sharp's Life*, i. 353.

[5] *Church of England's Complaint*, 1709, Preface.

[6] Beresford Hope, *Worship in the Ch. of E.* 26.

[7] J. C. Jeaffreson's *Book about Clergy*, ii. 92.

dition,' and of wealthy merchants or tradesmen, were often laid out in state in rooms draped with black, illuminated with wax candles, and thrown open to neighbours and other visitors.[1] Sometimes, as at Pepys' funeral, an immense number of gold memorial rings were lavished even among comparatively slight acquaintances.[2]

Throughout the whole of the eighteenth century Church discipline was in some respects a much greater reality than it is in our own day. No doubt in its later years the difference lay more in possibilities than in actual fact; so that the alterations in the law of excommunication made by the Act of 1813, exceedingly important as they were to persons who had come under censure of the ecclesiastical courts, had no very visible or direct bearing upon the English Church in general. Excommunication had been for some time becoming more than ever an unfamiliar word, limited almost entirely to the use of law courts. When, therefore, various obsolete practices relating to it were swept away and its consequences rendered less formidable, it is probable that few but lawyers were cognisant of any change. But in the first half of the last century, amid a number of complaints that notorious vice so continually escaped the formal censure of the Church, it is also evident that presentments and excommunications were far from uncommon, and that even open penance was not an excessive rarity. Episcopal instructions on the subject are frequent. Thus Archbishop Sharp requests his clergy to be very careful of anything like persecution; but where they cannot reform habitual delinquents, such as drunkards, profane persons, neglecters of God's worship, &c., by softer means, to take measures that they be presented. He would then do all he could before proceeding to excommunication. When that sentence had been actually denounced he allowed the clergyman to absolve the offender in sickness, when penitent, without the formal absolution under the Court Seal. Commutation for penances he did not approve of, but would sometimes allow them on the advice of the minister of the parish; the commutation to be entirely applied to Church uses and as notoriously as the offence had been. The public good was to be the rule.[3] Secker's instructions to the clergy of Oxford in 1753 are still more full, though he prefaces them by the acknowledgment that he is 'perfectly sensible that both immorality and religion are grown almost beyond the reach of ecclesiastical power, which, having been in former times unwarrantably extended, hath been very unjustly cramped and weakened many ways.'[4] Five

[1] A. Andrews' *Eighteenth Century*, chap. v.
[2] S. Pepys' *Diary*, v. App. 452. [3] *Life of Archbishop Sharp*, i. 209–13.
[4] Secker's *Eight Charges*, 166–72.

years later, in his first Canterbury Charge, Secker speaks much less confidently on this subject. Wickedness, he said, of almost every kind, had made dreadful progress, but ecclesiastical authority was 'not only too much hindered, but too much despised to do almost anything to any purpose. In the small degree that it could be exerted usefully he trusted it would be.'[1] He expressed himself to the same effect and still more regretfully in his last written production, his 'Concio coram synodo' in 1761.'[2]

Fleetwood reminded the clergy and churchwardens that they were to present not only for flagitious conduct, but also for non-attendance at worship, for neglecting to send children or servants to be catechized, for not paying Church rates, and for public teaching without licence.[3]

While a system of Church discipline carried out by presentments and excommunications was still, more or less effectually, in force, commutation of penance was very properly a matter for grave and careful consideration. It was obvious that laxity on such a point might fairly lay the Church open to a reproach, which Dissenters did not fail to make, of 'indulgences for sale.'[4] One of William III.'s injunctions of 1695 was that 'no commutation of penance be made but by the express order of the bishop, and that the commutation be applied only to pious and charitable uses.'[5] Early in Queen Anne's reign, in consequence of abuses which existed, the subject was debated in Convocation, and some stringent resolutions passed, by which it was hoped that commutations, where allowed, might be rendered perfectly unexceptionable.[6] Some lay chancellors, on the other hand, wished to do away with penance altogether, and to substitute a regular system of fines payable to the public purse.[7]

The poet Wordsworth has said that one of his earliest remembrances was the going to church one week-day to see a woman doing penance in a white sheet, and the disappointment of not getting a penny, which he had been told was given to all lookers-on.[8] This must have been a very rare event at that date—about 1777.[9] Early in the century this sort of ecclesiastical pillory

[1] Secker's *Eight Charges*, 239. [2] Id. 370.
[3] Fleetwood's *Works*, 472, 474, 479.
[4] T. Lewis, *Danger of the Church Estab.* &c. 1720.
[5] G. G. Perry's *Hist. of the Ch. of E.* iii. 100.
[6] Gibson's *Codex*, 1046, quoted in Burns' *Eccl. Law*, Art. 'Penance.'
[7] J. Johnson, *Vade Mecum*, ii. cvii.
[8] *Memoirs of W. Wordsworth*, by Christ'ph. Wordsworth, 1851, 8.
[9] So also in the South of England, between 1799 and 1803. 'The two women she took most notice of in the parish were the last persons who ever did penance at Hurstmonceaux, having both to stand in a white sheet in the Churchyard; so that people said, "There are Mrs. Hare Naylor's

was somewhat more common. But it was evidently quite unfrequent even then. Pope's parish clerk is made to speak of it as distinctly an event. This, which was called 'solemn penance,' as contrasted with that lesser form which might consist only of confession and satisfaction, was an ordeal which sounds like a strange anachronism in times so near our own. Bishop Hildesley thus describes it in the Isle of Man, where it was enforced upon certain delinquents far more generally than elsewhere. 'The manner of doing penance is primitive and edifying. The penitent, clothed in a white sheet, &c., is brought into the church immediately before the Litany, and there continues till the sermon is ended ; after which, and a proper exhortation, the congregation are desired to pray for him in a form prescribed for the purpose.' This having been done, so soon as it could be certified to the bishop that his repentance was believed to be sincere, he might be received back again, 'by a very solemn form,' into the peace of the Church.[1] In England generally the ceremony was in all respects the same,[2] except that no regular form existed for the readmission of penitents. Jones of Alconbury, in the 'Free and Candid Disquisitions' (1749), spoke of the need of a recognised office for this purpose. That which was commonly used had no authority, and was very imperfect. A form also for excommunication was also, he thought, a definite want of the English Church. For want of some such solemnity, excommunication was very deficient in impressiveness, not at all understood by the people in general, and less dreaded than should be, as signifying for the most part nothing more than the loss of a little money.[3]

The strongly marked division of opinion which had prevailed during the reign of Elizabeth and Charles I. as to the mode of observing Sunday no longer existed. Formerly, Anglicans and Puritans had taken for the most part thoroughly opposite views, and the question had been controverted with much vehemence, and often with much bitterness. Happily for England, the Puritan view, in all its broader and more general features, had won peaceful possession of the ground. The harsher and more rigid observances with which many sectarians had overburdened the holy day, were kept up by some of the denominations, but

friends doing penance."' - A. J. C. Hare's *Memorials of a Quiet Life*, i. 143. In 1805, one Sarah Chamberlain did penance in like manner at Littleham Church, near Exmouth.

[1] Hildesley's *History of the Isle of Man*, in Cruttwell's *Life of Wilson*, 371.

[2] Burns' *Eccles. Law*, Art. 'Penance'; Andrews' *Eighteenth Century*, 303.

[3] *Free and Candid Disquis.* 1749, § xviii.

could not be maintained in the National Church. In fact, their concession was the price of conquest. Anglican divines, and the great and influential body of laymen who were in accord with them, would never have acquiesced in prescriptions and prohibitions which were tenable, if tenable at all, only upon the assumption of a Sabbatarianism which they did not pretend to hold. But the Puritan Sunday, in all its principal characteristics, remained firmly established, and was as warmly supported by High Churchmen as by any who belonged to an opposite party. It has been aptly observed that several of Robert Nelson's remarks upon the proper observance of Sunday would have been derided, eighty or a hundred years previously, as Puritanical cant by men whose legitimate successors most warmly applauded what he wrote.[1] No one whose opinion had any authority, desired, after Charles II.'s time, to revive the 'Book of Sports,' or regretted the abolition of Sunday wakes. Amid all the laxity of the Restoration period - amid the partial triumph of Laudean ideas which marked the reign of Queen Anne—amid the indifference and sluggishness in religious matters which soon afterwards set in - reverence for the sanctity of the Lord's Day, and a fixed purpose that its general character of sedate quietness should not be broken into, grew, though it was but gradually, among almost all classes, into a tradition which was respected even by those who had very little care for other ordinances of religion.

Such, undoubtedly, was the predominant feeling of the eighteenth century ; and it is difficult to overestimate its value in the support it gave to religion in times when such aid was more than ordinarily needed.

There are many aspects of Church life in relation to the social history of the period which the authors of these chapters are well aware they have either omitted entirely, or have very insufficiently touched upon. It is not that they have undervalued their interest as compared with matters which have been more fully discussed, but simply that the plan of their work almost precluded the attempt at anything like complete treatment of the whole of a subject which may be viewed from many sides.

C. I. A.

[1] J. C. Jeaffreson's *B. of the Clergy*, ii. 140.

APPENDIX.

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